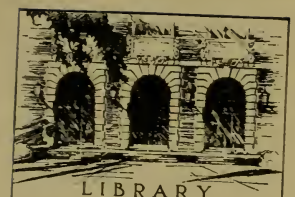

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THE TWO BROTHERS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE," "CLARE ABBEY,"
"THE YOUNG LORD,"
&c., &c.

'Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay."—DRYDEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE TWO BROTHERS.

CHAPTER I.

When I look back and in myself behold
The wandering ways that youth could not descry,
And mark the fearful course that youth did hold,
And melt in mind each step youth stray'd awry,
My knees I bow and from my heart I call—
Oh! Lord forget these faults and follies all.

LORD VAUX.

THE London season was over, and Mr. Gresham, full of high hopes, began to turn his thoughts towards Underwood. With that self-control and wisdom for which he was so remarkable, he had hitherto restrained

his intense desire to be in the neighbourhood of Audley Court. He had argued thus. "Mr. Vavasour was much attached to his father. He may possibly suppose two or three months of seclusion to be a proper compliment to pay to his memory. He will do justice to my motives in withholding myself for a time, and will the more cordially meet my advances, when the season of mourning is at an end."

So arguing, he remained in London until the end of July; consoling himself for the inevitable delay, not only by his designs for the future, but by his admiration of his present self. The failure of his first plan had for a time humbled him; he had felt certainly humble in being compelled to inform Mrs. Vansittart that a scheme on which he had bestowed much thought had ended in smoke. But from this humiliation he drew many draughts of consolation—the

equanimity with which he had borne disappointment, the fertility of imagination which had composed a second plan equal to the first, and finally the moderation he shewed in calmly waiting the now certain fulfilment of his hopes—each and all of these were themes for daily contemplation, admiration, and gratitude.

There was yet another plan which added to the adoration and wonder with which he contemplated his self at this present moment, a plan so formed out of self-conquest, paternal affection, and paternal wisdom, that when he considered it in all its bearings, he could have fallen down and worshipped the originator of the scheme. This plan was announced to Angela a few days before they left London.

"Have you lately visited Miss Price, my love?" he inquired, as she was leaving the breakfast room.

"I saw her last week, Papa. I go to see her as often as I may."

"I believe, my love, her society gives you some pleasure."

"The very greatest," Angela replied with warmth.

"I have been considering, Angela, that there are occasions in the life of young females—occasions to which I need not do more than allude at present,—when a companion of their own sex is desirable; especially when that companion combines with other qualities something of a maternal character. Being at all times anxious, my love, to secure your best welfare, I have determined to send an invitation to Miss Price, requesting the . . . . the pleasure of her society during the next few weeks or months at Underwood, as the case may be; nay, the invitation is already despatched, and if it will give you satisfaction to enforce it in

person, the carriage, my love, is at your disposal." He drew himself up and sat the model father studying the welfare of his daughter.

Angela's cheeks were dyed with crimson, and her eyes cast down as he spoke. No length of time, no power of habit, could accustom her to the matter-of-fact way in which he alluded to events, which caused to her so much anxiety and unrest. When she looked up, however, the impassive gaze she met told her how idle were all feelings of sensitiveness in her intercourse with her father, and banishing her shyness, she forced herself to express the delight she really felt in the intelligence he gave.

Some might have wondered at the pleasure felt by Angela in her aunt's society, but there was no cause for wonder. Though poor in intellect Miss Price was rich in sympathy; though she had nothing to give,

she had boundless powers of receiving and cherishing; and in this hard world, the givers of sympathy are not so many, that the very least can be other than an object of importance and affection.

Her delight was so great, that in expressing her gratitude, Angela kissed her father. Such a heartfelt caress was not common for her to give or him to receive; and he would have been either surprised or gratified could the sense of the enormous merit of the act he had performed, have left room for any surprise in the gratitude it excited. He smiled benignly indeed, but it was the smile of conscious, modest merit, not of gratified affection.

Miss Price accepted the invitation with all the humility and thankfulness Mr. Gresham had expected. She was indeed almost overwhelmed by *his* condescension, and the sense of her inferiority, and but for her affection

for Angela, might have declined it through the dread of proving herself unworthy of his favours; but that affection bore her through her many fears, and armed her to meet her brother-in-law with tolerable composure.

He behaved with his usual liberality on this occasion, and desired Angela to spare no expense in making her aunt a fit object for his eyes to rest upon; and although beauty cannot be given to a faded woman of sixty, Angela's taste and efforts did so far succeed, that after a scrutinizing gaze he pronounced her "passable." "She can never give importance to us, my love," he remarked, "but I am happy to see that she is able to receive importance from us. A handsome dress, as I have often observed to you, makes up for most deficiencies in the eyes of the world."

It was the 1st of August, when Mr.

Gresham and suite arrived at Underwood. The evening was lovely, the garden and surrounding country were in all the luxuriance of their summer beauty; and when Miss Price seated in one of the windows of the long drawing-room, inhaling the fresh and scented air, and feasting her eyes on the glowing masses of the flowers, she felt as if she had been caught up into Paradise.

Tears of rapture fell fast from her eyes on her new silk dress, and her handkerchief moved rapidly from the latter to the former, her terror for the destruction of her gown in no degree assisting her in calming the overflowing of her emotions.

"What is the matter, dear Aunt Jane?" Angela said, after watching her for some moments. "Is there anything that makes you unhappy to-night?"

"Not unhappy, my love, but too happy. I never thought to breathe such air, or see

such sights again, and I am thankful to you and your dear papa and to God. Kind friends make me weep, my love, but it is with joy not sorrow."

Angela stood in the window observing her in silence. "Such things never make me thankful," she said at last. "I have no room to feel them. It is the mind, Aunt Jane, that makes happiness, not outward things."

"Perhaps love, to you. My mind is not very strong, and things that others call little do give me pleasure. I like to look out on all these flowers, and think how good God is, and how beautiful His new world will be."

"It would be well then if all our minds were weak," Angela replied. "I wish I could think such thoughts, but I can't. I have too much to think of besides."

Miss Price dried her tears to look up in

her niece's face. Something in the tone of her voice compelled her. "You do not look happy to-night, my love," she then observed.

Angela pulled another chair into the window and sat down, leaning her head on her hand, as it rested on the window sill. "I don't know how I look or feel," she said sadly. "No not happy, certainly."

"And why, dearest?"

Angela burst into tears.

"My love, my love," cried her aunt much fluttered," what is this?"

"I hardly know," she replied, driving her tears away. "In London one cannot think, but everything here looks so calm and pure . . . . it makes me feel . . . . oh! Aunt Jane, that I wish the earth would cover me."

"That is what your dear mother used to say," observed Miss Price. "She used to

say that in London she thought of earth, but in the country of Heaven."

"She thought of Heaven everywhere," Angela said, while softer tears fell down her cheeks, "and what I mean is not like what she felt. I am thinking only of earth now," and she turned again to the window, gazing out intently on the distant woods.

"In what direction is Audley Court, my love?"

"There," and Angela pointed with crimson cheeks, in the very direction in which she had been gazing.

"Shall I some day see Mr. Vavasour?" was the next enquiry.

"I cannot tell," and Angela turned her eyes away, and again leant her head upon her hand.

"I hope I shall, my love, it would be a great pleasure to me."

No answer.

"I have heard a good deal about Mr. Vavasour lately, love."

"*You*, Aunt Jane!" Angela, exclaimed, raising her eyes in excited surprise.

"Yes, love, it does seem strange, I know, but I have often observed that one does meet strangely in life. It was singular, love, that you should meet Mr. Vavasour at my house, and it is strange that I should have met a person who knew him."

"Yes, very," she replied absently. "But what have you heard?"

"Oh! so much good, my love, it was quite a pleasure to hear." Angela turned her head away again, and listened in silence. "You know, dearest, we have lately got a new curate at Hampstead. A very pleasing young man, and particularly kind to me. Quite by chance, I found out that he was son

to a friend or relation of that kind gentleman you have spoken of sometimes near Audley Court."

"Mr. Addison?"

"Yes love; and a fortnight ago he went down to ask his advice on some business for his father, and he came back so full of Mr. Vavasour. He could talk of nothing else."

"Did he see him?" Angela asked without raising her eyes.

"Yes, my love. He saw him riding. Very grave and sad, he said, but handsome. *He* thought handsome, which I never did. But beauty is a matter of taste, and what we ought not to think of. Well, dearest, and he told me so much good of him. He says from what people say, he seems only to live to do good. That he seems to pass his time in finding out what he can do to help those about him; such a son, such a

brother, and such a father to his people; and they say, that young as he is, people seem to depend on him just as they did on his father, and in fact, that he is just like his father, so steady, and so good, only more gentle. And my young friend told me that he had business both nights he was down there, and had some law papers to copy, and sat up late, and there he saw the light in Mr. Vavasour's room burn so brightly till near two in the morning. In the distance you know, love, and he told Mr. ——, (your friend, love) what he had observed—and he said, many people had noticed it; and he supposed he felt he had much to learn to make himself fit for his duties. But, my love, you are shedding tears. Why is this, dearest?"

"At my unworthinesss," she said sadly, while bitter tears did indeed fall down her cheeks.

"But you may be worthy, my love, may you not? We all may if we please."

"I suppose we may," she replied more humbly than was her wont, and without further conference, rising from her seat and mounting on her chair, she sprang out into the garden, with an agility that astonished her aunt beyond measure, and wandered off to recover in solitude her disordered spirits.

Angela was far from feeling the certainty regarding her future prospects which her father felt. There were moments, indeed, when her hopes were strong, that he who had loved her once would love her still; but there were others when hope utterly died away; and there were more when hope and fear tortured her with their alternations.

This night was a desponding night. It was a

night on which she felt how unworthy she was of Everard's recollection, and with equal force that life without him was utterly worthless in her eyes.

During the many months that had elapsed since their last meeting, his image had become somewhat misty and undefined to her eyes. First, through her pique at *his* conduct; then through the bewildering weakness and misery of her own; lastly, through the change in his circumstances. Unable to realize what he now was, how he thought, looked, and felt, neither did she realize how her heart had cast its all of happiness upon him. She knew that there was something which made her cold as ice to all efforts to win her favour; not only among those she scorned, but in the more varied society on which she had lately entered; but her life passed as an exciting dream, and to herself she was an enigma. Occasionally she saw

in her secret imaginations, that could any man behave to her as she had done to Everard, she *never* would forgive it; and on such occasions the cold chill of hopelessness would follow, lest his thoughts should be like hers. But such reflections came but seldom. She was now "come out," and the course of dissipation swept her along, and admiration and flattery beguiled, though they could not win her; and the voice of conscience, though not dumb, was faintly heard.

But Underwood brought her a full awakening. Much poetry has been written on summer evenings, but nothing has ever yet expressed, as should and might be expressed, the strange calm charm of the first evening, when London, with its noise and cares and heat has been left behind. It is almost such a change as we may fancy the disembodied spirit feels when it passes out of the world's

pain and misery, and enters on its rest. How poor seem all the vain trifles that have occupied the fancy. How more than vain, how darkened with sin, the thoughts and imaginations of the heart. How the soul aches to reach some vision of real good, to grasp some true thing, to find some stay on which to rest its weariness henceforward and for ever.

So Angela felt as she wandered in the stillness and beauty and purity of that first evening; the soft air fanning her brow; the tranquillity penetrating her heart; the inexpressible loveliness soothing all her senses, and yet quickening her to think.

She became very good as she walked and talked with herself, very penitent, very humble, very desirous to make a step into a better life; and though it was but a mood, and though it was an earthly love only that was beckoning her onward, yet, undoubtedly,

even such moods are not valueless; for by whatever name the attraction be called, that must in its degree be good, which has led and is leading the soul to delight itself in good.

CHAPTER II.

A grace though melancholy, manly too,
Moulded his being: pensive, grave, serene,
O'er his habitual bearing and his mien,
Unceasing pain, by patience tempered, threw
A shade of sweet austerity.

HENRY TAYLOR.

NINE days of wonder is attached to most earthly surprises; but in these days, when time moves fast, nine days of wonder is as little to be expected as nine centuries. Nine hours for the most part exhaust exclamations, consternations, comments, and conjectures regarding any event, however weighty it be.

That the event, the surprise which had taken place at Audley Court, had survived not only through nine days but even nine weeks of wondering, and was yet unexhausted, arose partly from circumstances and partly from the singularly marked characters of the Vavasour family. The indignation which the disinheriting of Robert had caused, could not die away into the calm of indifference. The poor indeed in their toils and cares, and in the discovery that they had a master as good and kind as their late one, were shortly satisfied. Present pains and gains occupied their intellects, and if the matter was talked over at all, it was to say in simple truisms, that "all was for the best no doubt," or "it was God's will, and He knows better than we." But with the richer portion of the neighbourhood it was different.

Though, owing to his long absences and

other causes, not familiarly known, Robert was well known by sight and by reputation; and many a gay fancy had pictured the future at Audley Court under his auspices. Some rumours of his extravagances, and other careless habits, had mingled with the report of his marvellous charms, but, although the graver condemned, the very fact of the interest these rumours excited did but fasten more fixedly upon him the minds and fancies of all around. But while this was the case with Robert, Everard, on the contrary, was unthought of, and untalked of. That he was poor, and that he was not handsome; that he was grave in his demeanour, and correct in his conduct, these facts were known. They excited no interest, no speculations. He was nothing.

When, therefore, the change came, the announcement was like a thunderbolt in its fall, and like a thunderstorm was the fury

of the tempest that succeeded. To feel for the wronged and fallen is the generous characteristic of English nature. In Englishmen and women the sense of justice is very keen, and every act of injustice is felt with the force of a personal insult. It was so here. Young and old were up in rebellion. Mr. Vavasour was indignantly condemned; for Robert, even tears of pity and sorrow fell. Every thought was turned on Audley Court, and he was most welcomed at home, who could bring the most authentic intelligence regarding its inhabitants.

When, after three weeks, Robert took his departure, this first frenzy died away. Such violent excitements cannot last, and when there was no more hope of hearing what he said, or how he looked, that portion of the subject began to be forgotten. But it was replaced by a new frenzy—hate of Everard.

Each heart, each young heart especially, thought it a point of honour to hate him with all their power.

Everard had contemplated hate and misinterpretation as his portion when he made his decision, yet could he have known what things were said and thought of him, even by the young and gentle, possibly even *his* motives could not have supported him under the trial. "Cold-blooded hypocrite" was by no means an uncommon phrase in which to denote him, and certainly by no means an uncommon form under which to summon him to the mind's eye.

His doings were therefore watched and criticized through the jaundiced vision of prejudice; and yet, strange to say, from that cloud, even in three months he had emerged, and was winning his way in men's good opinions. Justice owned that he had been

hastily condemned, and justice became anxious to make atonement.

The first rumour that wrought a change in his favour, was when it was discovered, — as discovered things usually are, — and the news circulated about that he had paid all Robert's debts. The sum was large, rumour doubled it, and in that case rumour did him a favour. It was then discovered that he was making retrenchments at Audley Court, and it could not but be owned that these retrenchments were not only kindly and judiciously made, but that he chose such points as must have been least pleasing to his natural taste; denying himself especially every luxury in that region, which most comes home to a man's heart.

The tide of condemnation came to a stand still, then began slowly to move backwards. The poor began to tell of his kindness and forethought; men of business who chanced

to have to do with him, spoke of his excellent sense and judgment; elderly gentlemen of his unpretending behaviour; and those who are less accustomed to reason than to be guided by their fancy and feelings, were affected and converted by his appearance.

The last Mr. Vavasour, since increasing infirmities had taken from him his independance, had lived a secluded life, and was but seldom seen beyond the precincts of his own domain; but Everard, strong and active, and anxiously bent on mastering all facts important for the discharge of his new duties, was constantly to be met with walking or riding; and those who in their drives thus met with him, could not but own that there was nothing like triumph in his air. The "customary suit of black" was very plainly the livery of his mind; the most inexperienced, and the most

prejudiced, felt alike touched and softened as they gazed.

Minds were thus in transition at the time of Mr. Gresham's arrival; and as converts are ever zealous, and ever desirous to prove their changed opinions to be founded on truth, conversation turned on Everard with very ceaseless flow. Angela heard of all he had said during the last three months, and every word and every deed won her to esteem, and honour, and love him, a thousand fold more than before. But while she heard much—*him* she saw not.

The day after his arrival, Mr. Gresham sent his cards to Audley Court. Cards from himself and his daughter to Mrs. Vavasour and Hope, and a single card to Everard. The meaning conveyed in Lord Burleigh's famous shake of the head, was as nothing compared to what this card was intended to intimate. A volume might have been written

on the sentiments it was designed to express. To put it shortly, its messages were seven in number. First it condoled with Everard on the late Mr. Vavasour's death. Secondly, it intimated Mr. Gresham's acceptance of Mr. Vavasour's will. Thirdly, it conveyed *approval* of the will, not mere acceptance, but approval. Fourthly, it proclaimed Mr. Gresham's arrival. Fifthly, his haste and eagerness to claim Everard's acquaintance. Sixthly, it showed his urbane desire to efface the past; and seventhly, it said as plainly as words could speak, that daughter and worldly goods were laid at his disposal.

Whether or not Everard understood the hidden language of the card must be doubtful. He saw it lying on the hall table, glanced at it, and passed on. In three or four days he sent cards in return, and no further notice was taken.

The meaning Mr. Gresham had affixed to his own card gave him power to understand the language of Everard's; and after studying it and reading in it an expression of genuine satisfaction with all that he, Mr. Gresham, had intimated, and the announcement of an early intention of availing himself of the munificent and benevolent gifts awaiting him, he rested on his oars and was at peace.

When time, however, passed on and nothing was seen of Everard, he began to suspect that possibly the language of the card had *not* been read aright, and he determined to take a further step.

"Angela, my love," he said one morning, "have you visited Miss Linton yet?"

"No," she replied, with a sudden deep blush. "I did not like to go to her."

"Have you written to her on the subject of future intercourse?"

"No," she replied again, and added with a murmur, "I did not dare."

"I think, my love, she may have cause to complain of neglect on your part. Possibly in the present state of Mrs. Vavasour's spirits, she may be unwilling to leave her for any length of time, but we need not stand on ceremony, and since you have means of conveyance always at your disposal, it may be most proper, most considerate on your part to pay that marked attention which is due to persons who have been in affliction. I should wish you to write her a note; intimating your desire to renew that intercourse, which was so fruitful in happiness during the past year."

Angela remained silent with downcast eyes and a heightened colour.

"Do you not approve of my proposal, Miss Price?" he inquired, turning blandly to that lady. "I am aware that when the

sentiments of young females are concerned, it is possible for a man to be mistaken; but I confess I am unable to perceive any want of proper etiquette in the opinion I express."

"I think dear Angela had much better write," was the reply, flutteringly given—for Mr. Gresham's condescension always made her nervous—but perfectly decided in its import.

"I am happy to find my opinion coincides with yours," he said, graciously, and as he left the room he repeated his commands to Angela to write the note in question. "My groom will call for it in the course of half an hour," he added, and disappeared to escape from remonstrance.

Angela sat in profound thought, but of the feelings that agitated her said nothing to her aunt. She had been silent regarding the despondency, which for the

last ten days had been stealing over her, and of the struggle with her pride in being the first to claim attention, she was equally uncommunicative. She once had thought that she should be perfectly happy could she have her aunt's sympathy always at hand; but feelings change, and now that it was there always ready, always watchful, the desire to avail herself of it had departed. She was sad at heart and cared not to speak of her sadness.

The half-hour had very nearly elapsed before the letter was written. She then suddenly rose and obeyed her father's wishes. Possibly Mr. Gresham would have been surprised had the note been laid before him, at the terms in which she made known her wish to see Hope.

"Dear Hope,

"Will you tell me all the truth. Do you

like to see me, or do you not? I know how unhappy you have been, and would not force myself on you for the world; but if you would like it I should like it too. I can go to you at any time.

"Yours, affectionately,

"ANGELA GRESHAM."

She gave her orders that the groom was *not* to wait for an answer; and he obeyed her. She did not choose to seem in haste to have her offer accepted.

Hope's seeming neglect of Angela was from no backwardness, or distaste to her society, but simply from uncertainty regarding Everard's wishes on the subject. She had expected a visit as a thing of course, but as Angela did not come, and Everard said nothing, she was uncertain how to act. She asked the advice of her aunt; but Mrs. Vavasour had always been reserved with

Everard, and could not force herself to break the barrier now. Her advice was to seek the advice of Mr. Addison. Mr. Addison was out of health, and having been recommended to try the benefit of sea air, was at this moment absent. As an early return was expected, Hope, in obedience to her aunt's suggestion, postponed a decision till he came.

When Angela's note was given to her, she went at once in search of Everard; and on finding him put it into his hand with the simple enquiry what he wished her to do.

He coloured as he read it, but she could not decide what feelings caused the show of emotion, for, on returning it, he exclaimed with warmth and anxiety, "My dear Hope, surely you do not so mistake me as to think I have any wish to control your actions."

"No," she replied, hesitatingly, "only in this case. . . . . "

"Not in any case. If it will give you pleasure to see Miss Gresham, and I should think it would, pray follow your own wishes without any thought of me."

She looked at him, perplexed and anxious. His manner, though earnest as regarded her part in the concern, betrayed little as to what he felt for Angela; betrayed nothing in fact; it was as if he spoke of a common acquaintance. "Then I will ask her to come to-morrow afternoon," she said, after a moment's thought. "Will you send the note for me?"

He acquiesced, and waited while she wrote. When it was done, he took it without any further comment and dispatched it.

Angela paid her visit the following day alone. Although Miss Price had specially

been invited to Underwood, that she might assist a young female on such an occasion as the present, she was forced to resign her office, owing to a severe sore throat. Mr. Gresham had counted on her chaperonage in this first visit to Everard's house, and was mortified that the delicacy of his arrangements should be thus counteracted; but necessity, as he observed, knows no law of etiquette or otherwise, and Angela was permitted to go alone.

To Angela her aunt's presence or absence was a matter of utter indifference. She was far too much absorbed in other feelings to consider whether or not it was Everard's house. The hope of meeting him and the dread of meeting him, occupied her imagination to the exclusion of every other thought, and caused an agitation so excessive, that when she did actually arrive, was shown into the library, and found herself in Hope's

arms, she was unable to speak one word, and scarcely knew whether she was awake or asleep.

That long library, quite unaltered, the scene of the strange interview with Everard, that day of rapturous happiness never to be forgotten—when she recovered her senses, it was to this that her fancy flew back, and she sat down, blushing over the recollections it excited.

This long library was now Hope's common sitting room. Mrs. Vavasour rarely left her own apartments, and Everard, shrinking from the dreariness of the house, had made it a request to Hope that she should sometimes be found there. It was not to be supposed that Hope should have the same vivid recollections of the room as Angela had, yet something of recollection did arrive, as she saw her agitated countenance, and she wondered with what feel-

ings her young companion found herself there again.

They sat opposite to each other in silence; each uncertain what to say, and fearful to begin. It was Angela who spoke at last; as she looked at Hope, the remembrance of death, and the awe of death came over her, and her exclamation had no touch of selfish dreamings in it.

"Oh! Hope," she said, sadly, "how changed you are."

Hope was surprised, and a faint streak of colour flitted over her cheek. She had been thinking of Angela, and not of all the changes at Audley Court. "Yes, there has been a great change," she replied, after a moment.

"And *you* are changed in the change. Dear Hope, have you been so very unhappy?"

Hope did not immediately answer. An-

gela's question made her think of herself, a thing that rarely happened. "I think I am changed," she said at last. "I used to think, it was in my ignorance, that I did not mind sorrow, that it was my place to comfort, and that if I could have power to do that, I should not dread the sight of grief. But now. . . . ."

"Now what, dear Hope?" said Angela, anxiously.

"Now I know that sorrow is the punishment of sin, and must have bitterness;" and as she spoke a tear fell from her eye.

"Oh! how you must have suffered," Angela exclaimed, and she felt a kind of shame at her own trials, as she looked in Hope's face.

"I was not thinking of myself," was Hope's reply, "but of all I have seen and still see. It is not that I am unhappy myself, but I

long to do more to put grief away, and have not the power. It is *here;* and I find now that God must comfort, for man cannot."

"Are they all so unhappy?" Angela asked, after a moment, in a low voice.

"My poor aunt; you can fancy what that is Angela. She has lost all that occupied her; and she is not as some are, calm and strong in their grief. She is very good, but is miserable. She never murmurs, but I can see the struggle to submit almost breaking her heart. I had often thought of such sorrow as hers, but now I *know* what it is."

"And Mr. Vavasour," Angela asked, after another pause, in a still lower tone. "Is he too miserable?"

"Do you mean Robert or Everard, Angela?" And Hope turned her slow enquiring eyes on her companion.

"I mean Mr. Robert Vavasour," she said faintly, averting her eyes with a deep blush of shame from the gaze that was upon her.

"Robert is happier than Everard," Hope replied, after a moment's thought. "He is trying to wash out the past, and that gives him a bright hope before him. I think Robert is happier than he ever was, for I think,—I try not to expect too much, but I think"—she paused and clasped her hands together, and added—"that God has granted him repentance."

Angela sat silent and sighed. Hope's anxiety for Robert's welfare, showed her in true colours what her conduct had been during that mad time when right and wrong seemed obliterated in her mind. Shame pressed heavily upon her. It would have been a relief to confess it all, but she did not dare. She never had approached such sub-

jects with Hope, less than ever she dared approach them now.

After a short silence, during which she hoped but vainly, that Hope would speak of Everard, Angela inquired after Mr. Addison, and expressed her disappointment at finding him absent. She told Hope of her desire to begin to make herself useful, and to lead a better life than she had done, and said how much she needed advice and help; and this subject was more easily talked over than others, and the hour of her stay passed rapidly away. The clock struck five, and she looked up with regret.

"I told the carriage to come round at five," she said, "for we have got a dinner to-night, and I must be home early," and when those words were said she suddenly remembered the visit was past, and Everard had not been seen.

The thought had scarcely passed through her mind when he appeared. He came slowly in from the further end of the library and her heart had time almost to break with its beating before he reached her. Unable to articulate one word then she half rose and shook hands with him, and sat hurriedly down again.

At first it was Everard's mere presence that overcame her, but, as he stood before her, it was himself, his changed self, that affected her.

Miss Price's friend had called him handsome, and such an expression regarding him was no longer without truth. Thought and sorrow had so softened and refined his features that they in themselves were almost toned into beauty; and even had it not been so, there was an expression in his countenance, in his air and manner, so subdued, so melancholy, and so gentle, even strangers might have been affected by it.

In that first instant she forgot herself, and tears of pity and love for *him* sprang into her eyes; but when he addressed her, thoughts of her own self returned; and she was chilled into composure by his voice.

No *empressement*, no embarrassment; some restraint, perhaps—but a grave, kind quietness, such as under any circumstances he, in his position, would have shown to his cousin's guest.

"I must do my errand," he said, "though I hope it will not hurry you away. The carriage was waiting at the door as I came in, and they were coming to summon you. I said I would tell you it was ready."

"Thank you. I must go directly," Angela said, and she got up with a strange feeling of mingled sadness and relief.

As she wished Hope good-bye, she paused

to make arrangements about another visit, and Everard walked first to the window and then out of the room.

When Angela turned round he was gone. She pulled down her veil and hurried away with bitterness in her heart. "He hates me," she thought, and before she reached the door, tears at once of passion and sorrow were in her eyes.

But by the side of the carriage he stood awaiting her; and then in very shame she could have flown from him, and hid her agitation from his sight.

The same manner, however, gravely, calmly, kind, in an instant composed her again. A faint glow on his cheek was the only sign he gave of being in any way moved at her presence.

He stopped her as she was getting into the carriage and asked, "How do you think Hope looks?"

"Very much changed," Angela said hurriedly.

"Yes," he agreed, with a sadness that made her reproach herself for her hasty words, "But do you think her looking *ill?*"

"Perhaps not really ill," she said, desirous to relieve his mind, "but thinner than she used to be. She does not *seem* ill."

"Her life is very lonely, and if you can come and see her, I think it would do her good. I am *sure* she will be glad to have you come." He spoke anxiously, but it was only for Hope's sake.

"I will certainly," Angela replied, and as he said no more, she entered the carriage.

He then approached again and asked, "I hear Miss Price is at Underwood. Is that true?"

Angela replied that it was; and anxiously waited for what would follow.

"Will you remember me to her?" This was all that came.

Angela bowed her head, and so they parted.

She went on her way shedding bitter tears, and he re-entered the house.

Mr. Gresham, whose anxiety regarding the effects of the visit was too great to be restrained, came with much politeness to assist his daughter from the carriage.

"Did you see Mr. Vavasour, my love?" he enquired.

"Yes, Papa."

"I hope he is in good health."

"He seemed so," she replied wearily; "he did not say."

"You gave him my compliments of course, my love, and expressed my wish to see him here."

"No," and she shook her head. "I said very little."

"Ahem!" and for a moment Mr. Gresham came to a stand still. He then remembered the delicacy of the female character and added, "That was as it should be, my love. No young woman is forward to encourage the visits of the other sex. But no doubt he understood from your manner that you would receive him with pleasure. Did he express any wish, with regard to . . . . . to *our* society?"

"He asked me to go sometimes and see Hope," Angela replied, feeling that by that answer she should for the time at least relieve herself from the torment of his questionings.

"That is well; you have my permission to avail yourself of the invitation," and drawing himself up to a princely air, he

accompanied his daughter across the hall, and then allowed her to depart.

She entered the drawing-room, kissed her aunt, as she lay on the sofa, said she hoped she was better, and then sat down at the window and looked out in silence.

Time passed and she made no change in her position. At last Miss Price spoke. "Your father was here a short time ago, my love, and said he wished you to be in good time to night. I think a Bishop dines here and you must be ready."

Angela came towards her with a smile, and said, "Oh! yes I will be ready for the Bishop; it is only half-past six, and *he* will not care how I am dressed I suppose."

"No, love, I suppose not; but your father likes you to look nice."

Angela, however, now sat down by the

sofa, and made no haste to prepare herself for the Bishop.

"Did you see Mr. Vavasour, my love?" enquired her aunt at length.

"Yes, Aunt Jane, I did see him."

"Well, love."

"Well Aunt Jane."

"You know what I would say, dearest. Did you have a happy meeting?"

"A *happy* meeting!" she repeated scornfully. "No not exactly happy."

"No, dearest, I expressed myself ill,—of course not happy, but I hope . . . . . "

"If you wish to know all at once, Aunt Jane, I will tell you. He hates me;" and though tears trembled in her eyes, she drove them back with a look of indignant pride.

"I hardly think so love; indeed I feel sure he does not."

"Why?" and Angela looked in her face as if her fate was to be read there.

"Because he loved you once so very truly. I saw him, dearest, once after your father refused him. He told me not to tell that he came, and I promised; so I never did; but he loved you very truly. I could see that; though I don't understand such things much, I could see *that*."

"Yes, then he did," and Angela sighed and suffered the tears to fall from her eyes.

"And once, love, he told me, that he was not changeable, and I think I should say the same from his look; he does not look inconstant."

"Inconstant!" Angela exclaimed indignantly, "it is not inconstancy to change from a worthless object. If he *has* changed I do not blame him. If he *could* have behaved as I have done, I should care for

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him no more, and would *that* be inconstancy?"

"Perhaps not, love. I do not well understand these things. But I fancy he loves you still."

Angela shook her head, and yet was comforted.

CHAPTER III.

You give me praise for what I do;
You blame me for what's left undone;
Alas! how little is pierced through,
How little known of the lost and won
Under the Sun.

BARRY CORNWALL.

ANGELA continued to visit Hope; but not as she had done the year before, with the freedom of eager friendship, regardless of times and seasons; she could not bring herself to that. Her visits were matters of in-

tense thought. They occupied her entirely in the intervening days; her whole desire was to be at Audley Court, and see what one other visit would bring forth; and yet she restrained herself with an iron rule, and made her visits few and far between. If Everard had ceased to love her, he should learn to respect her. This was the thought that animated her to self-controul.

The second and the third visit to Hope passed without any further meeting. Miss Price, now restored to health, accompanied Angela, and sat patiently by while her young companions talked. She could be no restraint to any one, and though on the first visit, Angela had been indifferent as to her chaperonage, she now felt protection in her company.

As she and Miss Price were re-entering the carriage after the fourth visit, Everard

and Mr. Addison appeared in the court yard together. Everard hastened forward, and after shaking hands with Angela, turned with much kindness to speak to Miss Price who was already seated. Angela fancied she had learned a great deal of proper pride and self-restraint during the last month, and yet when she suddenly found herself in his society again, all she had learned seemed to fail her. She thought his greeting to herself so cold, while to her aunt it was warm and kind, and tears no effort could hide sprang into her eyes. It was better Mr. Addison should see them than Everard, and and she went to meet him as he more slowly walked up the court; but when she met him, she could think of nothing to say to explain her eagerness.

He, however, had something to say to her, or else discovered something at the moment, nad he kept her in conversation for a few

minutes; it was only when she was quite composed, that he led the way back to the carriage.

Everard assisted her into it, and though there was still the same want of what is easiest expressed by the word *empressement*, in his manner there was a smile, as he said, "You have done a good deed, Miss Gresham, in bringing Miss Price here. Fresh air has given her ten new years of life."

"I think so too," Angela replied, more naturally, cheered in spite of herself by his smile; "but it was Papa's good deed, not mine."

He smiled again, but said no more; nor made any effort to detain them. He and Mr. Addison drew back, and the carriage drove away.

Everard went into the house to fetch some paper for which they had returned home, and

then he and Mr. Addison pursued their way.

"Everard," Mr. Addison began, after they had walked for some time in silence, "will you allow me to say a word to you on a subject . . . . you may guess, perhaps, to what I allude."

Everard coloured deeply, but he made no answer either of acquiescence or denial.

Mr. Addison glanced at him, and observed with a slight smile, "I will suppose that silence gives consent. May I ask you then, do you not intend to call at Underwood?"

"No," he replied gravely, "this year is and shall be sacred. I do not intend, I do not wish to enter upon any society, or to mix in any pleasures this year. If my own feeling did not forbid it, I could not look at my mother and do otherwise, but

as it is . . . . . it is my own wish also."

"I understand Everard, and love your intention. I am not one, that you know well, who would sweep away the influences of sorrow before their work is done. There is, indeed, a danger of becoming morbid in the indulgence of sad memories . . . . but that is not to the purpose now. What I wished to say was, that I think from many circumstances Underwood might be an exception. I think . . . ."

"Forgive me Mr. Addison," Everard said, in a tone not exactly asking forgiveness, "but there are subjects on which advice is more than useless. This is one."

"Forgive *me*, Everard," he replied gravely and quickly, "I did not mean to be intrusive."

"You think me impatient," Everard said, colouring, though he smiled, "and perhaps

I am. I didn't mean, however, to be ill tempered; I only wish to remind you of a very certain truth. Advice in matters of practice is useful, but in matters of feeling not so. No man can tell what another man feels; unless, therefore, he makes confession advice is useless to him."

"And would confession be impossible?"

"Impossible," he replied with emphasis.

"Then I will not annoy you with useless advice; only this one word, my conscience forces me to say. Do not cherish resentment for actions which I do believe might more justly be excused and pardoned; and do not needlessly wound the feelings of those who think kindly of you."

Everard's cheek and brow were crimson, and he did not reply till the momentary passion, whatever it was, was past. He then said very gravely, "Thank you for advising

me; and do not think me obstinate if I repeat that it is difficult to advise on matters such as these. I am not ungrateful for your kind thoughts for my happiness; but I must judge for myself. I think, perhaps," he added after a moment's thought, "that you mistake me, but no matter."

Mr. Addison said no more. He was quite of Everard's mind regarding the usefulness of advice, if advice is not desired; and though pity for Angela had drawn him to speak his word of warning, he was content, having done so, to let the matter rest.

After another short silence he began again, and in a less grave tone. "You say advice in matters of practice is useful. Will you take my advice on a practical subject. You work too hard. I wish you to take more rest."

He might have known that no man is

amenable, where his health is concerned, and he did know it; nevertheless, he thought it right to speak.

Everard's only answer was a short laugh, and "I beg your pardon Mr. Addison, but really I am not a baby."

"A baby can be taken care of; but you are a wilful man, and therefore I speak. Work as you please all day long, but rest at night. Do you know, Everard, there are many comments on your open window and late vigils."

"People are very busy I must say, "he replied colouring, and with very unaccountable irritation.

"Perhaps, we all are. Perhaps if it were another man you yourself would make the same comments on his habits; and if you saw one who had once been remarkable for strength look pale and wearied, you would perhaps say to him as I do to you—'Take

more rest, and do not waste so precious a gift as health.'

"It is not sleep I want," Everard said, and he did look at the moment as if there was a weight upon him more than he could bear.

"Not alone, perhaps," replied his old friend kindly, "but still, Everard, mortal men do want sleep, even the best of them; you are up early in the morning, and there is time enough for work in the day. Be advised and rest at night."

"I will shut my window," he said, lightly. "reluctantly enough I own, and so hide myself from curious eyes, but I cannot promise that there will be any other change. I am very ignorant, Mr. Addison, and the day is not enough for my work. In practical knowledge I must learn what I can. My strong body was surely given me for some

purpose. There is nothing to fear for my health."

His companion said no more, and Everard continued. "Pray give me some other advice, for I would not have you think me obstinate. Except on these two points I think you will not find me so."

"Except on *these*," Mr. Addison said, with a slight smile, "that is what we all say. But do not think I mean to reproach you, Everard. I do not even wish you to take my advice if your conscience and reason counsel otherwise. You have taken to yourself, I do believe, higher assistance, and your views may be better and wiser than mine. Be assured so long as I live, I shall warn when I see cause, leaving it to you to be guided by my voice or not as you think fit."

"Dear Mr. Addison," Everard said, almost passionately, "I will take your advice now,

and always if I could, as if it were *my father's*, but at this time I cannot."

"Do not distress yourself," was the reply, tenderly given. "I fully trust your motives, and for the rest we each work out our own experience, and so become our own best guides. Let us speak of these things no more."

On the morning after Angela's last visit to Audley Court, Mr. Gresham, who always conducted his interviews with much pomp, wrote a note to Miss Price, begging her to let him find her alone in the drawing-room at half-past eleven o'clock.

Miss Price, no manœuvrer, was plunged into difficulties by this message, and spent an hour of torture, watching Angela's movements about the room, without being able to devise any expedient to get rid of her. Mr. Gresham relieved her by appearing before the appointed time; he requested his

his daughter to make a copy of a paper he put into her hands, and observed that it would be most carefully done in her own room. She obeyed and left the room without suspicion, and Mr. Gresham then placed himself opposite to Miss Price and began.

"You will excuse me for being a few moments before the hour I specified. I am somewhat engaged this morning. My wish and desire is to have a short conversation with you regarding your niece and my daughter, believing that her welfare is a matter of interest to you."

"Dear Angela, yes," said her aunt, nervously.

"Will you be so good, Miss Price, as to inform me what sentiments you suppose Mr Vavasour to entertain for Angela. You may remember that in our first interview, I put you in possession of my views and opinions

on this subject, and requested you to give such support to my daughter, as a young female may naturally require in circumstances of delicacy. You have, I believe, according to my wish, accompanied her in her visits to Audley Court, and though I have hitherto refrained from making inquiries, I have, I confess, been anticipating some disclosure on your part. I must now request you to be explicit. Do not let me hurry you ;" as he could not but observe the flutter of spirits into which he cast her, "though engaged, I have always leisure for the proper duties that devolve upon me."

"I have seen Mr. Vavasour only once," she replied, when she had collected her senses, "and then only for a very short time."

"Am I to understand then, that in my daughter's frequent visits to Audley Court,

Miss Linton has been the sole attraction, or do you intend to convey, that Mr. Vavasour has no intention of renewing his addresses to us. Pray, Miss Price, be explicit."

"I do not know anything," she said humbly. "I fancy he loves dear Angela, but it may be my fancy only. He certainly loved her once, and I should not suppose him to be one lightly given to change."

"I must beg you, my dear Miss Price, to be more explicit. Consider the importance of the subject on which we are engaged. Collect your mind, and exercise your judgment, and endeavour to answer me a few simple questions. I do not speak of the past. No wise man makes account of the past. Our business is with the present. Endeavour now to collect your senses, and tell me . . . . . There are certain delicate attentions, trifles, yet on particular

occasions not to be undervalued, by which those whom in common parlance we denominate lovers, are accustomed to insinuate their attachment to the object preferred. Can you recall any exhibition of such delicate attentions in the time, be it long or short, during which Mr. Vavasour was in my daughter's company. I believe I make myself understood. Be so good as to answer me explicitly."

"He was very kind to me," she replied, endeavouring to collect herself according to his desire, anxious to gratify him, yet too truthful to compose a narrative for the occcasion. "Particularly kind. He spoke to me more than to dear Angela. Mr. Addison was present, and Angela conversed with him. The time was short."

"You can recall, then, no such attentions as I have pointed out. Is it possible that his manner denoted no gratification in her

presence? Have you no reason to suppose him to be attached to her?"

"He put her into the carriage, and he spoke to her once, and his smile was very sweet. He has a sweet smile, and to her I should say it was particularly sweet."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Gresham. "Pray, proceed, Miss Price."

"I fancy that he loves her, but I cannot say, he appeared to wish to detain us. I should say he is not happy, for his countenance is very sad, but, indeed, the time was short, and I myself was fluttered, and . . . . I am sorry I can answer you no better. I will endeavour to be more watchful in future."

"Pray compose yourself," he said, waving his hand graciously. "I think, from the observations you have made, that the opinion I have formed is a correct one. I suppose him to be attached to my daughter, but to

be withheld, by—what shall we say, false motives of delicacy from making a second offer. You are aware, I believe, that his first offer was declined; properly declined; yet it is possible, declined in terms more forcible than was wise or polite considering (although the present state of things no human foresight could, as it appears to me, have foreseen). I am, therefore, disposed to apologize to him for any improper degree of warmth I may have shown, and to give him such encouragement as may be applicable to the occasion. Do you concur with me, that such a condescension may be desirable"

"I hardly know," Miss Price began with a faint glow on her face; however small her intellect, too much of a woman to admire such a mode of proceeding. "Would dear Angela be willing . . . I fear . . ."

"Fear nothing," he said, interrupting her.

"If motives of delicacy alone forbid it, be assured a daughter's delicacy is ever safe in a father's hands. I confess, I think it possible such an acknowledgment may be due from me to him. I confess, I think it more than possible, that after the manner in which I once considered it my duty to address him, I should personally assure him of the change in my sentiments. You may be assured, Miss Price, that my actions will ever be ordered with all proper attention to female decorum and modesty."

"You know best," she said gently. "There is no doubt he was wounded by your words."

"Exactly," and he waved his head gracefully, and rose from his seat. "I have to thank you for the attention with which you have heard me, and for your concurrence in my sentiments, and I must also request, that, what we have confidentially communicated to each other, may remain confidential."

He bowed slightly, and left the room, decorum and modesty, and paternal care and affection, fluttering about him as he went.

CHAPTER IV.

Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?

The plan on which Mr. Gresham had determined had been for some days forming in his mind. The concurrence of Miss Price was of no real importance to him, for his decisions were already made, before advice was asked; but he supposed a female opinion to be proper on such a subject, and he would have been glad also to secure female concurrence. Whether or no he had

that concurrence he was uncertain, but be that as it might, *he* had conducted himself with the propriety becoming the occasion, and was satisfied.

The very next morning, at an hour when a gentleman, he supposed, would most probably be found at home, he repaired to Audley Court. The old black towers shone before his eyes as he rode along, a dazzling sunshine imparting so much of beauty to their majestic and venerable forms, that he was positively agitated as he gazed. The attachment of Mr. Gresham to these old towers has been often dwelt upon; but in truth there was something really romantic in the fascination they exercised over his fancy. He longed for them as Haman longed for Mordecai's bow, only that all *his* sentiments were regulated with too much of order and propriety to allow of any excess.

Mr. Vavasour was at home, and Mr. Gresham was shown into the library.

While he awaited Everard's coming his thoughts reverted to the late Mr. Vavasour, whom until this moment he had forgotten; and he framed in his mind an exceedingly well-expressed form of condolence, with which to begin the conversation; but Mr. Gresham was by no means devoid of kindness of feeling, and when Everard appeared, he felt at first sight that his formulary would, on this occasion, be ill applied. It was, therefore, suppressed, and having had no time to frame another beginning, he contented himself with a remark on the state of the atmosphere.

"Perhaps I ought to apologise to you, Mr. Gresham," Everard said, when they sat down, "for not having called upon you." For since Mr. Gresham had thought it right to call upon him he felt that his omission

had, perhaps, been considered ill-mannered. "I assure you I should have done so if I had called anywhere, but I have not as yet."

"I perfectly understand. Let there be no ceremony between us, Mr. Vavasour. I am far, very far, from wishing for ceremony. I am, on the contrary, sincerely desirous that there should be a friendly, I might say a more than friendly relationship between us."

He paused, looking both benign and dignified; and Everard coloured and was silent.

"In point of fact, Mr. Vavasour,—for honesty, I believe, is the best policy, and is certainly the most honourable mode of proceeding between gentlemen—my object and purpose in calling upon you this morning is to assure you of my friendly, and even more than friendly feelings towards you. I am

aware that you may have cause to look upon me from another point of view. I have not forgotten a certain event which took place, certain conversations which occurred between us some months back, and my purpose this morning is to offer you some apology for my behaviour, and to make some explanations regarding my motives on that particular occasion."

"It is perfectly needless, Mr. Gresham." Everard said, interrupting him hastily. "I am very much obliged to you for wishing to make such explanations, but I assure you it is not necessary. I am certain your motives were good, and I have no desire to recur to what is past."

"I must request you to hear me, Mr. Vavasour. I consider it due to you, and due also to myself, that you should consent to hear me. I believe you will agree with me that a daughter's welfare is a father's first

duty. I feel the responsibility, I have always felt it, which Providence imposes on parents, and more especially on those in my position. I provided, therefore, for my daughter's establishment in life, not only well and wisely so far as she was concerned, but I think you will do me the justice, Mr. Vavasour, to own, with both wisdom and generosity in respect to the husband of her, or rather of my choice."

He paused for an assent, and Everard gave it.

"I do own it, Mr. Gresham."

"Such being the case, it was certainly natural that I should feel dismay when I perceived that my designs were in danger of being upset. . . . even though by yourself, Mr. Vavasour. In the emotions of the moment, I may have expressed my feelings more warmly than was just, and if it were so, if I gave you pain, I most sincerely

apologize for what I thought my duty commanded."

"You did give me pain," Everard replied after a moment's thought; "but as you only spoke what you were anxious I should understand, I had no right to blame you. I will not say that for a time I felt no resentment, but believe me, it is long past, and I am sincerely sorry that you should have felt an apology necessary."

"An honourable and candid man is never backward to own his failings, Mr. Vavasour. I am not ashamed to own that I was blind; all men are liable to error, and I among the rest. No human foresight I believe, could have anticipated the course which late events have taken. Had I been gifted with the power to penetrate into the secrets of futurity, believe me, my dear Mr. Vavasour, my conduct would have been altogether different."

A deep flush crossed Everard's face, but he made no answer.

"One thing more you must allow me to say. You must allow me to express my hearty, my entire concurrence in the decision made by your late father. The manner in which your name is now mentioned, the distinction which you now enjoy in the eyes of the world, convince me that he was gifted with that foresight in which I humbly acknowledge I am deficient, and engages me to extend to you *all* those feelings which once I entertained towards your brother."

He dilated into his largest proportions as he made this delicate insinuation of his generous designs, and then paused for an acknowledgment. But no acknowledgment came. There was a still deeper glow on Everard's countenance, but he said not one word.

Mr. Gresham was not a physiognomist; he never saw anything that was not as clear as daylight. The disturbance, however—whatever it might mean—on the face of his companion, *was* clear; and observing it, he felt no doubt that it proceeded from diffidence, and uncertainty as to how far the delicate insinuation was to be understood. He, in short, like other men who are entirely pre-occupied with one idea, and excited by the expression of it, lost in the warmth of the moment, the perception of the limits to which he might safely go. He gathered himself up to express his meaning with more perspicuity, and in so doing, in some degree forgot the decorum he prized so highly.

"I had hoped, Mr. Vavasour, that I had spoken so as to be understood. If I have not done so, if I have seemed to you reserved and obscure in my allusions, you must excuse me, on the grounds of that regard which

is due to the laws of common society. But believe me, I consider such laws of lesser importance than the serious interests on which our minds are centered; and for your encouragement and welfare, as well as for my own gratification, I am willing to sacrifice them, and to speak more explicitly. Allow me, therefore, to assure you, my dear Mr. Vavasour, that should it at any time, I speak of no time in particular, but should it at any time be your wish or desire to renew an application you once tendered to me, you will find my acceptance, not only willing, but waiting your orders; and should any scruple regarding my daughter, should any fears regarding her feelings cause you to hesitate, I believe I may . . . . ."

But here Everard rose from his seat, and in much agitation interrupted him. "You must excuse me, Mr. Gresham, but I cannot suffer this to proceed. I have listened too

long. I do sincerely thank you for the kindness of feeling you express towards me, although," and here his already flushed cheek deepened in its crimson hue, and a bitterness he seemed unable to suppress gave intensity to his voice, "I fear that it is to my position alone that I am indebted for the change. I can say no more, nor would I willingly discuss this matter further."

"Am I to understand then, Mr. Vavasour," Mr. Gresham enquired, not indeed that he really thought the question necessary, but thinking it both politic and dignified to put it, "that you decline to avail yourself of the favourable intentions I have expressed towards you."

There was a moment's pause; and Everard's face, which during the interview had been flushed and heated, became very pale. He answered, however, and his

answer, though low, was unfaltering—"I do!"

Mr. Gresham was so startled at this reply—in common speech was so taken aback by it—that he relieved himself by a forcible exclamation of astonishment, and an uplifting of his hands.

Everard said no other word, although there was a something in his compressed lips that seemed to say, violence alone restrained him from speech.

After a few moments' indecision, Mr. Gresham recovered his composure, and rising, with an imperial dignity of manner for which he certainly might be pardoned, bowed to Everard, and said "I wish you good morning, Mr. Vavasour, and you must allow me to apologize for having taken up your time with communications so indifferent to you;" and with another freezing salutation he was

leaving the room when Everard arrested him.

"You must not leave me in anger, Mr. Gresham," he said, with little of *indifference* in his voice; "I wish I could express how far, how very far I am from intending to show disrespect to you, much more to Miss Gresham, ..." he stopt abruptly, for his voice became unsteady, then began again. "If it were possible I would ask you to forget the painful circumstances of this conversation, and to allow me to remain, what indeed I must ever be. . . . ."

"What, sir, should you desire to be?" Mr. Gresham asked, with stately coldness.

"A friend, and a very grateful one," Everard said, with emotion, and he held out his hand.

Mr. Gresham was softened, but the offence to his dignity could not be so easily forgotten. He did shake hands; but it was a languid, inexpressive shake; and merely re-

peating his "good morning," he took his departure.

Everard closed the door after him, and then stood gazing out into the garden in a vacancy of thought that seemed to have no sense of time about it; and so remained until Hope's entrance aroused him.

"Are you ill, Everard?" she enquired, looking at him.

"Ill, my dear Hope! why should I be ill?"

"You look so."

"I have had a visit from Mr. Gresham, which has given me some pain," he said gravely; "but it is over now," and he sighed profoundly, as if thus to sweep away from his memory the recollection of what had passed.

Mr. Gresham went on his way. While in Everard's presence, offended majesty had been the paramount sensation in his mind; but when alone, disappointment, the dis-

appointment of his dearly cherished hopes, overcame his sense of dignity; and to efface disappointment he would have been contented to sacrifice a considerable portion of his dignity.

Insensibly he guided his horse's head to the hill mentioned in the Introduction to this tale, in order to gaze once more on the glories he had prepared for the Vavasours and himself. It was a fair vision; but not for its natural beauty was it now, or had it ever been visited by Mr. Gresham. There he had often stood, with a swelling heart, gazing over the fertile and extensive valley, and repeating, "I am monarch of all I survey," till tears almost, of pride and thankfulness, had filled his eyes. It was on the wide extent, brought by his forethought and care under the sway of one ruler, that his eyes delighted to rest; creation's beauties recreated by his hand.

In an altered mood he stood there now. Bitter mortification, fallen pride, insulted benevolence, and the sting of ingratitude, all these together caused his heart actually to smart with sorrow. For a time the very powers of his mind were prostrated by his disappointment, and it was not till they recovered their tone that comfort dawned upon him. He came at length, in the shape of a wise saying springing up from the stores of his memory, "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but time and chance happen to all men." If Solomon in his glory had had experience of this truth, he, Mr. Gresham, must not be astonished if his schemes were unattended with success. This idea soothed his mortification; and, endeavouring to compose himself by a noble submission to the inevitable lot of mortals, he took a solemn farewell of his idol, and left it at the top of the hill.

That is, he supposed he did; but before he reached the bottom of the hill, strange to say, he found his idol accompanying him home. How it was, that having solemnly forsworn it as the companion of his thoughts, he permitted it to cling to him, cannot be explained unless by the fact that such partings between men and their idols are of daily occurrence; but certain it is that before he reached Underwood it was not only whispering within, but was again absolutely tyrannizing over him, and luring him on to fresh schemes in the future. It had begun to renew its reign from the moment when he resolved to say nothing to Miss Price or to Angela of what had occurred. After that wise decision he proceeded to meditate in a manner which may be shortly embodied in these few reflections.

"The future is ever uncertain. It becomes a man to hope the best. Great de-

signs are not realized at once; and the noble spirit is not crushed by one, nor by two repulses. Man is a being of complicated structure; nor can man's passions be played upon like a harpischord. To touch the proper chord requires a degree of wisdom and experience not perfectly bestowed on any mortal being."

Having reflected in the general, he then proceeded to reflect practically.

"The future is uncertain. My plan is wisely and beautifully designed; and my daughter's attractions are generally allowed to be great. Wisdom plans, but practice crowns. Men are punctilious. It is possible Mr. Vavasour may quarrel with my openness; or, he may consider that thoughts of matrimonial engagements are unsuited to a house of mourning; or he may be a man of delicacy and may consider it an offence to delicacy, that a young lady should

be engaged to two brothers in the course of a few months, or . . . . ."

Among his many thoughts as on a former occasion, he found comforters enough, and thus it happened that shortly after the mortification he had endured, he was building on the future as certainly as ever.

The sense of his wisdom in thus retaining hope was confirmed shortly afterwards.

About ten days after his visit to Audley Court, Everard returned it, and Mr. Gresham was at home. *He* was stately, and Everard grave, but there was perfect politeness on both sides.

When the visit was over, Mr. Gresham, not without dignity, asked if he chose to pay his respects to Miss Price, with whom he understood he was on terms of intimacy.

Though it might have been guessed from Everard's countenance, that the visit was far from being desired, he, as if unwilling in any way to be guilty of further disrespect, consented to it, and was conducted by Mr. Gresham to the drawing-room.

It was a great mortification to the father to find his attractive daughter absent, and during the ten minutes of Everard's stay, his eye was perpetually on the door; but dignity and decorum did not permit him on this occasion to mention or to summon her.

After ten minutes, which passed like so many hours, so utterly unsuited were the three companions to each other, Everard rose with evident relief, and went away; and four minutes after his departure, Angela looked in at the window with her bonnet on.

"You have just missed Mr. Vavasour, my love," said Miss Price, quietly, even with all her love and sympathy unable to conceive the feelings her words could excite in her niece. "He has been sitting with your father and me for a few minutes."

Angela stood leaning on the window sill in silence, so astonished was she at the news.

"Why did he come?" at last she inquired.

"To call, my love, I suppose; he was as usual particularly kind, but exceedingly grave. Perhaps, love, because you were absent, but I cannot tell."

She walked away without asking more questions. It seemed perverse to have waited, hoped, longed, for this visit for months of weary waiting, and when it took place to be five minutes too late.

It was about this time that Angela began

to look upon herself as doomed for her faults and follies, to a life of disappointment; nor did the events, or rather non-events of the autumn, brighten this not very cheerful view of things. She never met Everard again. See him, she did often; sometimes at a distance, sometimes near enough for a bow or a smile or word; hear of him she did unceasingly, for all delighted to do him honour, now that their hate was passed by; but meet him she never did. He called again late in the year,—shortly before they left Underwood for a round of visits,—and at an hour when on every day but this, she had been at home, and on this day was only prevented from being at home by an accident to her carriage; and this last mischance filled her cup to the brim.

Though she had ceased to bewail her fate to her aunt, it cost her many, bitter, secret, silent tears; and much she mused on life and

its strange ways, and much on the folly which had estranged the only being whose love for her, had been for herself, and not her position. Robert's confession had deepened tenfold her distrust of the motives of those who approached her, and suspicion threw its cloud over her already clouded thoughts. She was in short in a very gloomy frame of mind, and though she owned she deserved all she suffered, she with her strong capabilities for happiness, could not bring herself to acquiesce calmly in such a state of things.

Having met with other small disappointments in her endeavours to make some poor people happy, she took advantage of these discouragements, to ask Mr. Addison his opinion generally on the use of disappointments to human nature. It was on the occasion of his last visit before she left Underwood.

Reading a good deal more of her mind than she thought she exhibited, he replied seriously—"I suppose they may be good for all, but for some characters I think they have a very special and particular use."

"For whom?" she asked.

"For those I think whose natural dispositions lead them too earnestly to desire a Paradise on earth."

"Then for me," she said, "I confess I do not like to be thwarted, and I do pine to be happy."

"Then for you," he said with a slight kind smile. "But dear Miss Gresham remember this. The disappointments will do nothing, will only irritate the temper unless they are received humbly and borne patiently. They can do no good in themselves."

"I am afraid they only irritate me," she said with humility; "they make me feel

bitter and sour to all the world. I suppose I may be wrong, but I *think* if I were happy I should be different. I think happiness makes me much more amiable and kind."

"There is no doubt it does," he said quickly; "to feel happy and to feel good are almost the same things; whereas to have the mind fretted with many cares is almost to feel wicked."

"Exactly," she cried eagerly; "then surely it would be better not to be fretted"

"It would indeed; and that is just what I wish you to understand we should never be. There are many thoughts should help us to this. Not to speak now of more serious ones, that we suffer far, far less than we deserve; that every trial is sent to do us good, and bring us good, perhaps on earth, certainly in heaven; and then again, that it is but for a moment, and will pass

away, 'even on earth that it will pass away. "

She looked at him very earnestly as if to discover whether he had meaning in his last words, but she could not trace any special thought in his grave, kind face.

" One must be very good to feel all that," she replied, after a moment.

" But difficulty never disheartens a sincere person. You must try and feel it, my dear Miss Gresham."

"I will try," she replied. But her thoughts were evidently wandering, and after a pause of consideration, she said, blushing slightly, but speaking composedly and steadily, "Talking of good people, I am going to ask what you will perhaps think a strange question. I have often wished to ask it. Do you call Mr. Vavasour a religious man? Good—I know he is, because everybody speaks of his goodness, but is he religious? You must

not think I ask from levity, or because I would rather talk of my neighbour's faults than my own."

"What distinction do you draw between a good and a religious man?" he asked with a slight smile.

"A good man I can suppose to make mistakes," she said quickly, "but not a religious man."

"Perhaps you expect too much even of a religious man," he replied, smiling again; "but however, in a degree your distinction is just, for a commonly good man walks in his own strength, but a religious man in the strength of God."

"Well!" she asked eagerly.

"In that sense I certainly do consider Mr. Vavasour to be a religious man. That he has all the feelings some might require for the term, I will not, because I cannot, assert; but I do believe that he frames his

life as in the sight of God, and that from his duty so seen, cost him what it may, he will not swerve. That his decisions are always right I would not undertake to be sure. Why do you ask?" he enquired looking at her fixedly.

"Only because I wish to know," she replied gravely. A moment after she added, "Thank you for so patiently answering my questions. I think you are right about disappointments, and I will try what I can do to bear them better. I have a good many trials in that way, I really do think," and a tear shone in her eye, "I wish I could take them more cheerfully."

"I think you have," he said kindly. "God grant you may improve and not waste them."

He saw a wistful look in her face, as if she would have won from him some expression of hope to carry away with her, but

he was too truly wise to speak only for pity's sake. What would happen to her or Everard before another eight months had flown by what foresight could picture?

CHAPTER V.

Yet fall
What will, or can, Love makes amends for all.
C. Hervey.

It was after Mr. Gresham's departure, and the last day of the year, that the young groom once before-mentioned among the servants at Audley Court stood up in his place at dinner, and announced to his fellow servants this piece of intelligence: "that the time was come for him to inform them

that he had made up his mind to call Mr. Everard his master, and to give him his due."

The announcement was received with "Hear, hear," from Harrison the butler, and a thump on the table and "well done," from old Roger. And the two audible expressions of satisfaction, only conveyed the sentiments of the rest. Everard had already won from his servants an honour almost equal to that given to his father; but so long as the young groom stood out in dignified obstinence, a dread of being looked on as time-servers had withheld them from any strong expressions of regard.

When the first buzz of satisfaction died away, Harrison, somewhat formally, begged to know the reasons on which Thomas grounded his change of opinion.

"I said to myself, I'd see," was the reply, "and I have see'd. I said I would be in no

hurry, and I hav'nt been in no hurry. I said, I would do it if it was just, and now I say it is just; and I'll tell you the reason why. I said to myself, if Mr. Everard goes and marries that young lady over there, and makes a great lord of himself, with ever so many millions of gold, and tries to cut out poor Mr. Robert every way, then I'll have nothing to say to him, nor call him Mr. Vavasour, not if I'm put in the stocks for it; and I wouldn't. But now I see what I see, and I know what I know, and I see no love of money in him, and so I say it's just to give him his due, and I'll do it if all the world goes against me."

"Hear, hear," said Harrison again.

"That's true, Thomas," replied Betsey, "but I do wish Mr. Everard was married, poor dear! that I do. He wants comforting. Miss Linton is fond of him now, and does as much good as she can, poor dear,

but neither she nor my poor missus have eyes for him, where Mr. Robert's in the way; and I think he feels it. That's what I think."

"All in good time, Betsey," said Harrison solemnly; "the poet says, the funeral bake-meats are no fit ornaments to furnish out the marriage table."

"No sure," she replied sadly.

"Miss Gresham's uncommon fond of Mr. Everard, our Mr. Vavasour," observed Roger with great simplicity.

This speech was received with a shout of laughter from most of the servants, and with "oh, fie Roger!" from Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Vavasour's maid.

"Why, there's no harm," he said, looking round bewildered. "Bless her pretty face, I see it as plain as I see my wig in this pewter plate here."

"Poor dear!" exclaimed Betsey with a sigh.

"Be that as it may," said the young groom, "it's no business of ours. Mr. Everard, or Mr. Vavasour, as I mean to call him from henceforth, won't have anything to say to her, beyond what a neighbourly gentleman should. And that's what shows he has an honourable mind; and that he don't mean to cut poor Mr. Robert out. I know his thoughts as well as I know my own; and that's what I should do in his place, and so I'll give him his due from henceforward, let who will go against it. And so here's his health and a happy new year to him."

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm, and could the echoes of the country voices have been carried to Everard's ears, they might have cheered a heart which stood in need of cheering; for Christmas had brought Robert back, and with his return, had returned all the most painful feelings attending Everard's new position.

Robert came for a visit of three weeks.

He was well in health, and though, perhaps, in a degree more thoughtful than he had ever seemed in his life before, he still was the same Robert, with his wonderful charm and animation, casting gladness about him, none knew how, without effort, as without consciousness. To his mother he was loving as ever, and to cheer her seemed the one object on which he was bent. By his endeavours Mrs. Vavasour was won to smile occasionally, and to take some interest in what was passing around her. That which Hope and Everard had utterly failed to do, Robert did in one week.

In one respect, however, Robert's efforts failed like the others; and that was in his attempt to win her from her seclusion. On his first arrival he had implored her to come amongst them for his sake, in terms so fond and endearing, that it seemed strange his adoring mother should withstand him; but

she did withstand. She wept bitterly in refusing his request, but no consent was won.

It gave him pain at first, on her account it gave him more pain afterwards, for before the three weeks had expired he saw plainly why it was she hid herself from their eyes. Her intercourse with Everard was constant and kindly, but it was cold. To her *he* devoted time and thought, and care and affection, but he could make no progress in healing the wound his advancement had caused. His excellence of nature she had always owned, she owned it now and trusted to it; but that very excellence had injured her darling, and she could not love it. She was a poor unhappy woman, who found that that passion she had cherished with too much idolatry, had become her tormentor.

To his position in the house Robert accommodated himself apparently without pain, certainly without effort; but he perceived

that that which he could, his mother could not do. She could not see Everard master and Robert nothing. He saw this plainly, and he saw that Everard understood it also; and he could well imagine that a part of that gravity which unceasingly sate upon his brow, was caused by his mother's conduct.

He attempted no change until the conclusion of his visit, but the day before his departure he made it a last request to Mrs. Vavasour that she would leave her rooms, and give her children the happiness of living with them once more. "I ask it, Mother," he concluded, "for Everard's sake."

"I cannot," she said, quickly. "Do not ask it yet, dear Robert. I will do it when I can."

"If not for Everard's sake, Mother, I ask it for mine. I don't know how *you* bear it, but it is to *me* a perpetual grief to see

his face. You surely see he looks unhappy."

"Yes, perhaps," she allowed, "but there are many reasons for that. You know there are reasons for that. . . . ." She stopt with tears raining from her eyes.

"Yes, Mother," Robert said, tenderly, "I know; I know there are many causes, but still there is a something beyond these, and I think you cause it. Dear Mother, how you used to scold me, if I hurt a worm, or a poor little tortured bird, and does it now give you no pain to torture your own son."

"Oh! Robert," she exclaimed, "what would you have me do?"

"I would have you love and honour him, Mother, by every means in your power, and be proud of having such a son; for if ever a man has sacrificed happiness to his duty, I think Everard has. Do you suppose it

was not torture to him to take my place as he did; but could he do otherwise? I ask you, Mother, could he have done otherwise? And dear Mother," he continued, winding his arms round her, "I want you to own more than this. I want you to own that my father was right, for has he not set over his people a son like himself, and has he not, so far as man can yet see, saved me from destruction. If I had been rich and idle, I am very sure, even with my best resolutions, there was no hope for me. Dear Mother, if Everard has saved me, will you not give him your blessing for that?"

She did consent. She could not but have consented; but Robert's words told both ways; for the more his generous nature shone out the more she felt the injury he had received; and though with her body she did endeavour to do Everard honour, she could not force the feelings of her heart. *They* held out against her hus-

band's will, strong and rebellious, and while they rebelled she could not but be miserable.

When Robert spoke of himself as saved from destruction, it was not that he seemed in any way confident of his persistence in well doing. There had been one occasion on which disappointment had been bitterly felt. When on Christmas-day Everard and his mother and Hope knelt at the altar, Robert was absent. He had left the Church with a flushed cheek and reluctant step; but though reluctant still had left it.

Not reproaching, not urging, Mr. Addison simply asked him the reason why.

"Because I am not sure I am in a fit state," he replied, gravely.

"I think you are, dear Robert, as far as man can judge. Are you not leading a new life, and sincerely purposing to continue to lead it?"

"I am not sure," he said, in the same

tone. "I am not at all sure of my sincerity, or else I would do what I know I ought."

On an inquiry from Mr. Addison as to his meaning, he said, "he must have more time. What he had hitherto done had been from remorse, and now that that was beginning to lose its power, he was not at all sure of himself."

In this he persisted; he was evidently really distrustful, and his distrust left some anxiety in Mr. Addison's mind.

After his departure, Everard inquired one day of Mr. Addison, if he was not perfectly happy about him.

"Happy, yes, Everard," was the reply, "very happy at what has been done. But we must have patience."

Everard looked annoyed. Very young people do not much like that word patience.

To them it implies more of care than hope.

"You are angry because I do not speak with perfect confidence," Mr. Addison said with a slight smile, "but, Everard, there is no wisdom in over-confidence. I only fear as Robert fears himself, because time has not sufficiently proved his strength."

"I can conceive of no reason but one," Everard said, with some vehemence, "for having a single fear; and in that *I* think Robert was right. I do not like people to be over rash in such solemn things. In every way he seems to me perfect."

"You make more of the word fear, Everard, than I intend," Mr. Addison said kindly; "all I feel is, that poor Robert's nature is very weak, and his temptations unusually strong ones. One day's temptation,

while his principles and habits are new, might mislead him again. For him and for ourselves it is always wisest to face the truth. It has not been uncommon for one in his position to be disheartened by the very confidence and over expectations of his friends."

Everard said no more, but after a short pause proceeded to speak on a subject which occupied much of his thoughts, and which, perhaps, was the cause of his annoyance, in the qualified opinion of Mr. Addison. This subject was the relations of Robert and Hope.

To Hope alone his return had brought no increase of *personal* happiness, but rather the reverse. During his last stay, with whatever difficulty it was accomplished, he had managed to keep up the old intimacy; but on this occasion the tie was altogether broken; and though forced to be constantly

in her society, reserve and constraint had grown up between them. No more confidence from Robert, no more help, no more advice from Hope.

Everard watched them both intently, and he could see what Hope evidently could not see, that Robert's thoughts were seldom absent from her; and he put his own interpretation on his brother's constraint.

It was on this subject that he now spoke to Mr. Addison, and asked his advice as to whether or no he might write to Robert and say what he felt.

"No, Everard, wait," was Mr. Addison's earnest reply. "Do not be over hasty. Reformation is of slow growth, not in the outward, perhaps, but in the inward man. Robert has been during the past months under the influence of excited feelings. Excitement dies; wait and see whether refor-

mation grows when excitement is past. I see I give you pain. You are in too much haste to make others happy; but wait. It is a hard lesson, perhaps, but a wise man must learn it."

Everard smiled, and said, "I will take your advice to-day; reluctantly, I confess, but I will take it."

And he did wait.

But when Easter brought Robert a second time, not only unchanged, but with all the best and highest parts of his nature shining in his face and flowing forth in his life and conversation, Everard felt that he read him most truly who trusted him most entirely; and that it was more for his welfare to help him on to happiness, than to leave him longer to struggle alone.

One morning in May he said to Hope as she was leaving the breakfast-room, "I want to speak to you, Hope. I have some letters

I want you to read. Shall I find you in the library about twelve?" There was seriousness more than usual in his manner.

"Oh! Everard," she cried turning back, "not about Robert?"

"Are you distrustful, Hope?" he said reproachfully, "I did not expect that from you."

A flush of regret flitted over her cheek, but she did not justify herself.

"It *is* about Robert," he continued quickly. "I want your . . . . your assistance and advice. Nothing I hope that will distress you." And he left the room without saying more.

When he returned he had a number of letters in his hand. He found her awaiting him with evident anxiety, but as evidently without any suspicion of what he had to say. He came and stood by the fire with the letters in his hand, and said, "Last year, Hope, I believe

you were of my opinion, when there was a question about my mother's going to live with Robert. I think you agreed with me that it was best at that time, that he should try his strength alone."

"Yes I certainly did," she said, "and I think, Everard, that time has proved you were right."

"I hope there is no doubt about that, dear Hope. But *now* things are different. It seems to me now a very great question whether Robert would not be better with a home. It is on that subject I want your advice." He paused and looked at her. "What do you think, Hope?"

"Perhaps you are right again," she said after a little thought. "I had been so happy to see him as he is, that I had not begun to consider about a change. But I did hear him say the other day that he was sometimes dreary of an evening, an

yet did not feel to care for Mr. Perceval's company."

"So did I, Hope; that made me think a great deal about it."

"Has Aunt Joan decided? Have you talked to her, Everard?"

"Yes," but I do not think she will go." He paused again, then looking at her with a furtive smile, he said, "Will you go to him, Hope?"

"Me," she cried turning deadly pale and clasping her hands together. "Oh! Everard."

"My dearest Hope," he said, stooping towards her tenderly, "have I startled you. I did not mean to do it; but there it is; will you be Robert's wife? He dares not ask you himself, and so I must do it. And Hope," he continued seriously, laying his hand on hers, "remember that I have been made your guardian, and trust me that I

would ask nothing but what your own father and my father, could they have been here to act for you, would have approved. There," he added quickly, for he saw her agitation was very great, " read these, and I will come back again presently," and he hastily left the room and left her to herself.

The correspondence was arranged according to their dates. The first letter was from Everard to Robert, asking his opinion as to the desireableness of his having a home in London. He told him plainly the reasons which had made him oppose it the year before, dwelling especially on that reason which regarded Hope. He said he had fancied that Robert was not at his ease in her presence, and that he had thought it most right to save Hope from the pain of altered circumstances as far as was possible. But now he concluded, he no longer felt the same, and he would be glad to know Robert's wishes.

The style of the correspondence was according to the usual manner of the two brothers very simple and concise, not a word more than was necessary.

Robert in his answer thanked Everard, but said he preferred that no change should be made. Not he said that there were not times when he longed to have a home, but the reasons against it were stronger than his wishes. "These reasons are chiefly two," he concluded. "First, I am quite as sure as ever that my mother would be miserable cooped up in London; and secondly, I really cannot undertake to live constantly with Hope, as I used to do. I know that I must not think of marriage for some years to come, and therefore, I had better not be tempted to think of it. You perhaps may think me very weak, but some people cannot help saying what is in their minds, and I find it hard work as it is."

Everard's answer to this was to say, that he supposed he understood that Robert alluded to money matters, when he said he could not marry, and he was anxious to show him, that provided he could be content to begin moderately, he thought that question might be satisfactorily arranged. He then reminded him, that Hope had been left to his guardianship, and asked him if he could doubt, that in the event of her marriage with any other person, his father would not have provided for her like his own daughter. He therefore proposed, he said, to give her £10,000, which, with what Robert had, would enable them to begin with £1000 a year, or rather more. Would Robert be content with this? he asked.

A very serious reply was returned, thanking Everard for his care and interest, but reminding him of his father's constantly ex-

pressed desire that the property should never be weakened by over charges.

"I know that I, who have done so much to charge it, have no right to speak on this point, but I must remind you of it, lest your desire for my happiness should tempt you to forget." This was the conclusion of the letter.

There was yet another answer from Everard, laying before Robert a full statement of the present condition of the property. This statement showed the care and judgment which Everard had exhibited in the management, for it proved, that, notwithstanding the new charges, the condition was hopeful and flourishing. He directed his attention especially to one fact, which he said, enabled him with a clear conscience to make new charges. This was the paying off an old mortgage at a very high rate of interest by a sum borrowed at a lesser

rate. As the mortgage was large, this had made a considerable difference in the yearly receipts.

Robert now changed his ground, and wrote a somewhat passionate and excited letter on the subject of his unworthiness of Hope. "That she loves me," he said, "I will not even pretend to doubt. I know that angel cannot change, but that she would marry me, I do very much doubt, and still more do I doubt my right to ask it. I do not speak of how I have treated her, for I do believe she would forgive that as she forgives everything; but think of my past life and hers, and ask yourself if it is fit that two such contrasts should be joined together. I dare not think of it, and am inclined to wonder, that you, her guardian, should propose it, especially, as whatever I may *intend*, promise and vow I dare not."

There was more, and forcibly put, and by

the dates of the letters it was evident that Everard had not replied to it in haste. There was nearly a week between them. This was the reply, when it came.

"My dear Robert,

"For many days I have been thinking of your letter. You put my duty towards Hope, in a stronger light than I had yet considered it, and I would not answer till I had thought it over in every point of view. I am sure I do not wonder at your feelings, and though it is hardly for me to say so to you, I can assure you, it is not because I think lightly of your objections, that I still hold to my wishes. But there are other points of view in which the case may be considered. The past is your own consideration, the future is what I have to do with, and for that I do trust you. One who has behaved as you have done to me, shows

a nature too noble and generous not to be safely trusted with the care and happiness, even of one like Hope. So far, therefore, as my consent is needed, you have it.

"Not for worlds, however, would I press you further, and if you feel you cannot undertake the trust, this shall be the last I will say on the subject. I shall be disappointed, but that is not a matter of importance. Shall you think of coming down and talking to her?

"Always, dear Robert,

"Yours affectionately,

"EVERARD VAVASOUR."

There was a pause of four days more, and then this answer.

"My dear Everard,

"If you can trust me, that is more to the purpose than my own feelings.

You would not unless you saw good reason, and that gives me confidence. I put myself in your hands. Speak for me to Hope. Tell her I dare not ask it—tell her what I feel when I think of her as my wife. Yet tell her that with her love and prayers I do trust I may yet be more worthy of her. You must tell me how she looks. If she can bear to think of it, I will come and speak for myself.

"Yours affectionately,

"Robert Vavasour."

So ended the correspondence.

Hope was still sitting with the letters in her hand when Everard returned, and as she did not seem to observe him, he took a book and sat down at a distance in silence.

It was some time longer before a slight

movement roused her to a sense of her abstraction. When he saw she observed him, he got up and went towards her.

"Have you considered, dear Hope?" he enquired, not with a smile, for he saw that grave thoughts had occupied her, and were now painted on her pale cheek.

She looked up in his face with an expression of confidence that touched him to the heart.

"Like Robert, dear Everard," she said, "I put myself in your hands. I trust you when I could not dare to trust myself," and she put both her hands in his as she said the words.

"I think you may trust me," he said, stooping and kissing her brow, with a something fatherly in his manner, that sat upon him

with singular grace. "We all may be mistaken, but I do believe that Robert is now worthy of your love. If I did not, no thought for his happiness could have led me to wish for this marriage. Your happiness was too sacred a trust. Dear Hope, are you happy now."

"Yes, too happy," she said, and tears shone in her eyes.

"Then all is well, and God bless you, for you have made *me* happy!" and his face did look for the moment as if the weight of care that oppressed it, was lifted and gone.

As the course of this love now ran smoothly it needs but a few more words. The marriage took place in the following month of June. Before that time Everard went with

Robert to London to make some arrangements, and to find a house. A small, but pretty one was chosen near the Green Park. Its cost was beyond what was justified by Robert's circumstances, but Everard insisted on supplying the *unjustified* part of the sum, and, as was now felt by all, when Everard insisted he had his way. His argument was that Hope was unaccustomed to London and must have fresh air; and to this Robert submitted.

"I submit," he said, laughing, "because I can't help it, and because I think it gives you pleasure, and because . . . . . ." He paused and looked into his brother's face to see if he might venture. He certainly saw no invitation to venture, yet he proceeded, "because I hope you will soon have so much money, you will not know what to do with it."

There was no answer to this, it had only the effect of restoring the grave look which was beginning to be shaken off.

The marriage was celebrated with great privacy. This was partly in order to induce Mrs. Vavasour to attend, and partly according to a well known opinion of Robert's. "I don't like to see a woman stared at," he had often said, "on her wedding day more than any other day, and my wife never shall," and he kept his word. Nevertheless, he requested Hope to dress herself with as much care as if there were to be a thousand spectators, and she in whose eyes everything was sanctified that could give pleasure to him, woke up her slumbering taste and did her utmost to gratify him.

When she came down in her bridal dress before they set off for the church,

he seemed to feel what she was, almost beyond what he had ever felt before, and stood gazing at her in a kind of transport, as serious as it was full of love and admiration. "My dear Hope," he said at last, with sadness in his voice, "how you make me ashamed. What have I ever done that I should have an angel to bear me company?"

Everard and his mother stood at the door to see them take their departure, when—after the ceremony was over, and they had returned to Audley Court for Hope to change her dress,—they set out on their way.

Hope's last word was to Everard. She came to him and put her hand in his, looking with grateful affection into his face. "It is to you we owe it all, dear Everard," she said in her sweet tremulous voice. "You have saved him, and made me happy. God bless you for it."

And Robert's voice murmured something of the same import as he shook his hand, and followed her.

Everard's heart swelled and tears were in his eyes. He stood watching them in deep thought.

When the last sound of the wheels was heard, he was roused by a hand laid gently on his arm. He turned round. His mother was there looking up at him, with such a look of love as had often been Robert's portion but never his, till this moment. She smiled almost playfully and said, " Can you be content, Everard, with an old mother for your company."

More than a thousand repentant protestations were contained in those simple words; Everard was loved at last, and he felt it. He kissed her with an emotion which, in its warmth and freedom, reacted upon her, and the chains of many years' binding, fell off and left them free.

Robert's marriage had had the effect of rousing Mrs. Vavasour from the cloud in which her grief had wrapt her. The thought of the new home of her darling had won her to look into that future over which so dark a mist had been brooding, and she found there hope and comfort. Once aroused she saw her duties more clearly, the shadow fell away, and she found strength for what yet was left in life for her to do. And when the shadow departed she saw Everard as he was. She saw what Hope and Robert felt towards him, the trust they reposed in him, the reverence with which they regarded him; no longer unwilling she allowed them to speak, and they told her of all his ways, and all his acts of generous kindness; of the affection he was winning from his people, of the regard and estimation of all — she heard and pondered it

in her heart, and thus a change came.

It seemed a strange thing to Everard, that that action, which had cost him such agony of spirit, which in its beginning had seemed to produce only hate, should in the end win for him the thing his soul longed for with feverish longing. He who had been nothing was now all. *The* one on whom all seemed to hang for affection, help, and guidance, the one on whom warm words of grateful love were for ever falling, making his heart beat and his eyes dim with tears. It was very strange to him, and being more inclined to humility than to pride, he felt humbled in the possession of the blessing, which, when absent, he had almost thought he deserved.

But though a strange thing in Everard's eyes, it is no uncommon thing in the

ways of the world. The rough path of a hard duty, or that which looks like a duty to sincere eyes, sometimes becomes strangely smooth, when the steps are steadfastly set to walk along it; and many a low valley long despised in men's eyes, becoming fertile through the dews of Heaven, draws to itself the gaze which it seemed unwilling to meet, and in due time is exalted.

As Everard and his mother re-entered her sitting-room after Robert's departure, she again laid her hand on his arm, and said,

"Dear Everard, do you never mean to be as happy as Robert is?"

And, again, a shadow fell over his face, and he said, "The future is a dark place, Mother, who can tell what is hid in it."

"Do not some make it darker than it need be?" she asked again.

He silently shook his head, and the subject dropped

CHAPTER VI.

The backward flower may yet be wooed to blow,
The dying flame may yet be set a glow,
The truant bird be lured, the fickle heart
Won back again by spell of love's sweet art;
But thou, so kind, so constant, yet so cold,
What spell for thee shall all love's store unfold?

From Poems by E. Hinxman.

"Well, Angela," cried Miss Vansittart, eagerly entering the drawing-room at Underwood, "what do you think? Mr. Gresham has proposed, and Mr. Vavasour has accepted."

Angela was seated in a window of the

room drawing. Miss Price was lying on the sofa. It was in the middle of August. Mr. Gresham (bringing Miss Price in his suite to be again a chaperone to his daughter "on certain delicate occasions,") had returned to Underwood about ten days before, his mind as tenaciously bent on the acquisition of its idol as in the previous year. The Vansittart family were paying him a visit.

There was certainly nothing very attractive even to the most anxious heart, in the terms of Miss Vansittart's announcement, but Angela's inner life was too constantly agitated to allow her to hear it with calmness. A flush of astonishment strangely mingled with hope and anger, dyed her cheeks, and a startled light flashed in her eyes.

At the sight of her discomposure, Miss Vansittart laughed heartily, as heartily

that is, as she thought it becoming in a young lady to laugh, and more heartily than she would have laughed had Mr. Gresham been in the room.

"Why, Angela," she exclaimed, "what is the matter? You could not look more moved, if a proposal of marriage had been in question, instead of a simple proposal to dine."

"You startled me," Angela said coldly, and resumed her drawing without further inquiries.

"But why," asked her companion eagerly. "What did you think I meant? Did you really, is it possible you could really suppose, that I was speaking of a matrimonial proposal. Is it possible?"

With an effort Angela drove away her annoyance and laughed. "If your father was my father, Adelaide," she said, lightly, "you would sometimes feel as I do, *terri-*

fied at what he might think it right to do."

"Terror!" said her tormentor. "I don't think it was only terror I saw in your face."

Angela made no reply. She was now herself again, guarded and prepared for Miss Vansittart's questioning.

"Come, Angela," she said, drawing a chair into the window. "Now I have found you alone or as good as alone," glancing at Miss Price who was reading, and quite unmoved by what had passed, "do talk to me a little. I must tell you that I know all about you and Mr. Vavasour. My interest was excited about him last night, so I made it my business to drag it all out of your Papa in the course of that walk we took this morning. He has been telling me everything from beginning to end."

"Then probably you know much more than I do," was Angela's cold reply.

"Perhaps," with a little air of importance. "But still I know only the dry facts such as a man can tell; I want the comments which only a woman can make. Come, do be a good girl, and make a *confidante* of me."

"I will answer any question you please to ask," Angela said. "But as I have nothing whatever to tell, you must excuse my making confidences."

"You are very ungrateful, do you know," said Miss Vansittart playfully. "You owe this dinner engagement entirely to me. After your Papa told me the dry facts this morning, I made him come in and write an invitation to dine and sleep for Saturday, on the spur of the moment. He consented, wrote it, desired the groom to wait for an answer, and the answer being favorable,

allowed me to be the bearer of the good news to you at once. It came while we were playing at billiards, and I resigned my place to Mamma, and hastened to you."

"Thank you."

"Oh! you wretch, is that all you have to say after my efforts in your service?"

"As you could not possibly know, Adelaide, whether it would please me or not, I can only suppose you wish to see Mr. Vavasour himself."

"There I will confess you are right; for though I am entirely of your Papa's mind that the union of the two properties is motive sufficient to form the matrimonial project, still being somewhat younger than he is, and in its proper place somewhat more romantic, I allow that the outward man and manners are of importance. Now tell me—Is Mr. Vavasour handsome?"

"My aunt says not."

"Do you, Miss Price," said Miss Vansittart, startling her into attention. "Do you call Mr. Vavasour ugly? I am sorry for that."

"Ugly, my love, no indeed," replied Miss Price much distressed. "I believe, I did once say that to my taste he was not handsome; his nose is large, and his eyebrows very marked—but he is pleasing, decidedly pleasing."

"And what do you say, Angela?"

"Oh! pleasing, decidedly pleasing," she replied carelessly.

"Well, I see I must judge for myself. He comes on Saturday. I told you that, Angela, did I not? to dine, but not to sleep; and I can tell you, that since you refuse to confide in me, you must be prepared to be watched with the eyes of a lynx. I have no doubt that *I* shall discover what is the mystery."

"What mystery?" Angela said impatiently provoked out of her coolness.

"What mystery? why, my dear Angela, the very inexplicable mystery of why, seeing he is now in a position to be accepted, he does not repeat his former unwelcome proposal."

"If you put it in that light, I think what you call the mystery is very easily explained. Some men are not particularly fond of being accepted for their position, and some women would scorn them if they were."

"Yes some, but not you, Angela," she replied mischievously. "You would e'en take him, although he has the misfortune to have a fine property saddled upon him."

"What makes you take so much interest in Mr. Vavasour?" Angela asked, evading any reply to this accusation.

"That Mr. Selwyn with whom you sent me

in to dinner last night. He talked of very little except Mr. Vavasour, and as I had nothing better to hear from him, I allowed him and even encouraged him to speak. You know, Angela, men say, that a woman never praises a woman. Now I have happened to remark, that except very young men, a man never praises a man; and therefore when a man does praise a man, I always suppose there is good reason."

"And Mr. Selwyn praised Mr. Vavasour?" Angela asked with as small a show of interest as she could possibly put on.

"He did indeed, he even excited *my* prosaic mind. He told me that a year ago he in common with many others, positively hated him for stepping as he did into his brother's place, but that somehow or other, he has so won the good opinion of his neighbours, that there is not one who does not

love him. He says, he mixes in society a good deal now, as much as he can without leaving his mother alone, and that his manners and conversation are so agreeable, so kind, and so sensible, that . . . . . in short, I suppose, Angela, that if Mr. Selwyn has any daughters, they are your rivals ; and perhaps a great many others besides. I did not like to ask the question point blank, but I beat delicately about the bush, and I found, that Mr. Vavasour is not looked upon as a marrying man, but that if he were, he would have no great difficulty in finding a wife."

"I should think not," Angela said composedly. "When a person's character is very high, and there is nothing in other ways to repel, I think the difficulty must be *not* to like them."

"That is your opinion, is it, Angela? And you think love is guided by character?

Well, my view of the world differs from yours; and I should say, upon the whole, that my experience is more to be trusted. However, I must tell you one thing more that Mr. Selwyn said. He found a fault. Are you interested? Do you care to know what it is? Have you any fears for Mr. Vavasour's character?" and she fixed her mischievous eyes on Angela's face.

"Not much fear for his character," she said, with a very slight glow on her cheek, "but I should certainly like to hear what the fault is."

"To tell you the truth, it was the fault that most took my fancy. Not that I myself admire it; I quite agree with Mr Selwyn, and with your papa, who joined in the conversation, that it is a great fault; but still it is not a very common one, and therefore it took my attention. The world is full of people, worthy and unworthy, who

try to make much of themselves. To be blameably backward is less common, and though a fault, is not an offensive one. When I hear of a young man in Mr. Vavasour's position, being too modest to take his proper place in the world, I think it a very great pity, and so I shall tell him if I have an opportunity; but it excites my interest."

"Yes," Angela replied, with the same quietness of manner with which she had pursued the conversation.

Miss Vansittart here gave a slight and affected yawn, as if to do away with the impression of having been really interested in the conversation, and began to admire the embroidery of Angela's collar, and the fineness of her muslin gown. This was a common change in her ways and manners. She had more in her than she quite liked to have, or knew what to do with, and after

any unusual shew of interest, retraced her steps to worldliness or frivolity, as the practice of some serious duty she had set before her eyes.

Angela was too lavishly supplied with the means of adorning herself to take much interest in her dress, and while her companion admired, her thoughts went far away.

There was nothing new in their track. The same hope, the same fear, the same despondency, had occupied her mind for many months, and were occupying them still. She returned unchanged. "The strength of love is constancy," and certainly hers day by day gathered strength, and engraved itself with iron in her soul. This was not altogether a conscious virtue, or a willing one. There had been many moments during the weary, yet exciting months she had passed, when she had said she would wait no more. There had been moments, when

her heart sickening with hope deferred, and pining to be loved and cherished, had resolved—among the many who only waited the softening of a glance to come forward,—to make a new and happier choice.

But little did these resolutions avail her. It is the happiness, and yet the trial of attachments like hers, that they cannot be shaken. Sympathies are broken, fancies change, charms are dispelled; but the chain that binds to the rock of a lofty character no wind or storm can break, so long as the rock itself is fast and sure. Inconstant natures may, indeed, be weary of reverencing, as they grow weary of all things else in earth and in Heaven; but better natures are not fickle ones—and in these the love that is built on reverence is as immoveable as the stars in the sky. Angela struggled with her passion only to find that it grasped her

with a might beyond her power to overcome.

So she returned to Underwood, and so entered again upon her life of exciting expectation.

On the Sunday after her return, she had twice seen Everard in church; but there had been no meeting outside. In the morning *she* had been late, and in the afternoon *he* was so; and on both occasions he had remained with his mother—who was still unwilling to encounter the gaze of strangers—when the service was over. Whether this was a pain to him or no, she could not tell. Their pews were on different sides of the church; and though she had fancied that his eyes followed her down the aisle, she could not be sure.

"I am glad I shall see Mr. Vavasour," broke in the placid voice of her aunt,

about half-an-hour after Miss Vansittart left the room, "I shall be happy to meet him again."

Angela started from her meditations, and went to her and kissed her. She did feel sanguine at this early acceptance of her father's invitation, and thus her heart expressed itself.

"You will be happy too, love?"

"I cannot tell," Angela said, and sighed, and sat down again to her drawing.

Mr. Gresham stood at the drawing-room door to receive Everard, much in the same manner as he had received Robert two years before; and with something of the same pomp he would have conducted him around the room; but Everard escaped from him. Leaving Mr. Addison, with whom he came, to hear the conclusion of Mr. Gresham's speeches, he went quickly

across the room to Angela, and having as quickly shaken hands with her, retreated to the background, where Miss Price sat, and placed himself by her side. It was all so easily and rapidly done, that Angela's heart had scarcely begun to bound, and her cheek to flush, before the meeting was over. How over she could not tell; but she was so far relieved as to be convinced that even Miss Vansittart's curious eyes had seen nothing to satisfy them; and she resolved that this first meeting safely over, nothing to gratify them *should* be exhibited during the remainder of the evening.

Mr. Gresham was disappointed in being unable to make a hero of Everard. He could not appreciate a character that did not love to walk in the eyes of the world; and he gave a sigh to Robert.

Mr. Selwyn's complaint regarding Ever-

ard's manners and habits, was the common complaint of the neighbourhood. Perhaps it is the case in all countries—in England it certainly is so great a pleasure to admire, and either privately or publicly to make a hero, that in the same degree as arrogance offends, over-diffidence displeases. It is a disappointment to a very good trait in human nature, and human nature is angry. And yet, on the other hand, it was this very simplicity and modesty of nature which had won for Everard the regard in which he was now held. It might disappoint, but it attracted—it might be condemned with the lips, but the inner heart approved; and, though with reluctance, it was some times confessed, that in his peculiar position even over-diffidence, perhaps, was fitting.

Unwilling to be thwarted in all his efforts to do honor to his guest, Mr. Gresham,

when dinner was announced, approached Everard, and desired him aloud to take his daughter in to dinner. Having made his arrangements, he then gave his own arm to Mrs. Vansittart, and departed.

A bright color glowed for a moment on the cheeks of both Everard and Angela, but he obeyed Mr. Gresham's commands without hesitation, and came to her side at once. Not so Angela. Not coldly, yet with dignity, she stood up on his approach, and with ease and self-possession said, "No, I think it will be better for you to take Miss Vansittart," and making a slight introduction, she drew back.

Again he colored, but obeyed with the same perfect obedience.

"Will you take me, Mr. Addison?" Angela asked, having previously mortally offended a youth, by sending him in to dinner with Miss Price, and she placed

herself at the table well satisfied with what she had done.

But the satisfaction did not last very long. From her end of the table she could not help observing what passed at the other end; and the easy conversation which was kept up between Everard and Miss Vansittart, annoyed her. She observed, and justly, that he was changed. Having been forced into notice, all that was awkward in his manners had worn away, and he was able to bear his part in common society without effort or pain. His countenance, when in repose, was still singularly grave; but being no longer permitted to be silent, the gravity was not so striking. He was changed, as life and society changes all men; and in his case there was no doubt that the change was an improvement. But Angela could not, and would not, own it; a feeling of jealousy

and annoyance crept over her, and after some struggle, the mind's feelings came forth in words.

"Mr. Vavasour, I see, has quite recovered his spirits," she observed to Mr. Addison.

"In a degree," he replied, "not entirely. Even yet, I sometimes accuse him of moroseness."

"I don't see much of it," she said quickly.

He glanced at her, but said no more.

"I hear he mixes a great deal in society," she began again, after another somewhat angry gaze down the table.

"Not a very great deal; what he does is chiefly for his mother's sake. She will not see any one herself, and he thinks it necessary therefore, for her good and her happiness, to have some new things to tell her. He leaves her unwillingly, but he

thinks occasional absences make diversity in her life; and he is right."

"Yes, I dare say. I was not disapproving, I assure you, Mr. Addison. I was only remarking on the fact as a new one. He strikes me as being very much changed."

"You will not think so when you see more of him. I see him most days, and I see no change. Except . . . ." he added, after a moment, "that he changes as we all ought to change—he improves."

"Oh, yes, so I hear," she replied; but she was not in the mood to think of any changes with pleasure, and her tone was not cordial.

"I think *you* are changed, Miss Gresham," Mr. Addison said, looking at her after a short silence.

"Am I? How?"

"You are graver and quieter; *older*," he added, with a smile.

"And is it a good change?" Angela asked, smiling also.

"Yes, I think so," he replied, kindly.

"Do you *really* think I am growing better? I should be very glad;" and there was real anxiety in her voice.

"Yes, I think so," he repeated.

"I wonder why you think so. What have I done; I feel so very far from being better myself."

He looked round to see if any one was listening, and then said quietly, "You used to give me much pain by your wandering eyes at church, you do so no longer. That is one good change."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, colouring deeply. "I remember you told me once. Yes I have tried to change that. But perhaps . . . ." She stopped, and sighed, and said no more; but meant perhaps to say, that the inner eyes were wandering still.

They continued to talk during the remainder of dinner; not so unceasingly, however, as to prevent Angela from perceiving the flow of discourse between Everard and Miss Vansittart. Not even in the early days of their acquaintance had Everard been thus conversible with her.

On returning to the drawing-room, Miss Vansittart approached her with her hands joined together and said, "My dear Angela, I must really beg your pardon! I am afraid you will never forgive me."

"For what?" Angela said, forcing a smile, but uneasy in heart.

"I will tell you. Quite inadvertently I am afraid I have deprived you of Mr. Vavasour's society this evening. In the course of dinner I asked your Papa if he would let me play at whist to-night—you know I have before now begged him to let

me join his party, and he has refused, thinking I did it out of civility—well he agreed at last; and then quite without thought I asked Mr. Vavasour if he would be my partner; to my utter dismay, he said yes. I am really sorry, Angela, but I could not help it."

Angela's heart died within her. This, then, was to be the end of that meeting, from which she had hoped so much. She turned pale with disappointment, but seeing four curious eyes eagerly watching her face, she controlled herself enough to say indifferently, "If it pleases you and him, you are quite welcome. For myself I hate the very sight of whist, but that I suppose is a matter of taste."

"You seemed to be getting on famously with Mr. Vavasour, Adelaide," said her mother. "I was quite afraid Mr. Gresham would be jealous."

"Oh, no fear of that," Adelaide replied, with a slight affected laugh, "he knew what I was doing. He told me to make much of Mr. Vavasour, and I was only obeying orders."

Angela had now recovered herself, and sitting down and inviting the others to sit down also, she said, composedly, "What did you talk about, Adelaide? I should have thought no two people on earth could have had so little in common."

"What has that to do with conversation?" was Miss Vansittart's reply. "Society would be very tame if there was nothing but agreement."

"I don't want agreement; but to talk pleasantly people must more or less see things from the same point of view. Now, I should say, you and Mr. Vavasour might have been born in different planets."

"I should think we were, and that he was born in the planet Mars, for instance; but let people come from whence they may, I will find means to make them talk to me. But however, Mr. Vavasour and I *had* a subject in common, and we did great justice to it."

"And what was that?" asked Mrs. Vansittart. Miss Vansittart bowed to Angela with a peculiar smile.

"Me!" cried Angela, indignantly. "I should be much obliged to you, then, not to talk about me."

"I am very sorry, but I really cannot oblige you. I talk of you very often. You are quite one of my subjects. I admire you, and blame you, and envy you, just as the circumstances suggest, and you would rob me of one of my greatest pleasures if you set an embargo on my lips."

"And what line did you take to-night?" asked her mother smiling.

"I began by admiring, of course, and then I asked him the question point blank whether he did not admire also. You know, Angela, I had no reason to hold my tongue. And what do you think he said?"

Angela's heart beat, but she only quietly said, "Very little, I should guess."

"Well, he did not make an oration, certainly; but he answered readily,—no blushing or stammering, as I had expected, 'Yes, very much.' So then I went on to my next subject—envy; and on that I dilated at some length. But here we did not agree so well; in fact, to say the truth, I think he looked on my views as very worldly. When I observed that I could conceive nothing earthly so happy as your position, he said gravely, 'that he did not think great riches were an ad-

vantage to a woman, but much more a trial.'"

Angela blushed, but remained silent.

Miss Price, who generally slumbered by fits and starts during the evening, here softly murmured, "It is all as God ordains," a sentiment which was very commonly in her mouth, and which during her half slumbers, she sometimes applied with less opportuneness than at this moment.

"Very true, Miss Price," said Miss Vansittart good-humouredly, "and I hope you will not think me wrong if I say I wish it had been ordained for me. I do not agree with Mr. Vavasour at all, and so I told him; and I took that opportunity to give him a piece of advice which I had been treasuring in my mind for some days, namely, that he, in his position, ought not to keep himself so backward. I told him position was not given to be hid under a bushel."

"What did he say?" Angela asked eagerly, forgetting how little interest she desired to shew on the subject.

"He did not much like my advice, I think. He tried to change the subject again and again, but it is one on which I feel strongly, and so I persisted, and delivered myself of a great many wise sentiments. He said, at last, he was very much obliged to me, and he hoped he should profit by my advice; but it was not serious, and I am very much afraid I made no impression."

"Young men are apt to be perverse," said Mrs. Vansittart, vacantly, as she looked over her rings and bracelets, and wondered why the gentlemen sat so long after dinner.

"How prettily you are dressed to night, Angela," observed Miss Vansittart, changing her manner. "I made that remark to Mr.

Vavasour; and he looked at you and said 'yes, he liked white;' so now you know his taste, if you did not before, which I suspect you did. What did you give for that silk, and where did you have it made?"

"I know nothing about it," Angela said, impatiently. "I have told you a hundred times that I know no more about my dress than the man in the moon. Papa told me to bring six new gowns into the country, and I obeyed, though I thought it was shocking waste. I told my maid to go and order them, and this is one."

Miss Vansittart put up her hands to her eyes and Mrs. Vansittart said, "I remember when you were quite a little thing, Angela, finding you one night very angry about wearing silk frocks. Some poet says, I believe, that the boy is father to the man. I am sure in your case the girl is mother to the woman."

"I think I remember," Angela said laughing, "that was the first night I ever saw Mr. Merivale. Do you know that he is coming over. We expect him here in about three weeks."

"I rejoice to hear it," said Mrs. Vansittart! "He is too great a stranger to us all. But here come the gentlemen at last!" and as she spoke Mr. Gresham and his suite entered the room.

Poor Angela was destined to new disappointment. Had Everard intended to approach her he could not have done so, for the mortally offended youth, thinking no small things of himself, and determined to make amends for the tedium of the dinner hour, took a chair, placed it in front of Angela, and cut her off from the room; and she, too conscious of her intense desire to escape from him to allow it to ap-

pear, was forced to endure with patience.

Everard was first seized by the button, while an old gentleman expounded in his ears his views on foreign politics; he was freed from this grasp after a time by Mr. Gresham, who brought a request from Mrs. Vansittart, that she might be allowed to make his acquaintance. She looked on all young men in Everard's circumstances under two aspects; first as valuable in themselves, and secondly, as valuable in respect to her three daughters; and she laid herself out to make herself agreeable to him.

Angela watched, and could she have seen one weary glance directed towards herself would have been content; but no glance came. She did not think he looked interested or amused, but there was no appearance of a wish to escape, and languidly and restlessly

she endeavoured to attend to her own companion.

Then came a move; and hope once more arose; but it was only to the whist table, which,—in a desire to show his gratitude to Miss Vansittart for her interest in his favourite recreation—Mr. Gresham caused to be set out at an earlier hour than usual.

Everard was summoned; and no longer fearful of her motives being read too plainly, Angela freed herself from the youth who had poisoned her evening, and sitting down by her aunt, indulged her troubled thoughts in silence.

From this comparative peace she was aroused by an order from Mr. Gresham to entertain them with music; she obeyed and was followed to the piano-forte by the youth, and by Mr. Alfred Vansittart, a young gentleman who for several years had been carrying

on a mild courtship, insipid but constant, never daunted, but never elated into hope.

Though improved and improving outwardly and inwardly; though softened in manner, and to a considerable degree disciplined in mind, Angela was still very far from a saint either in gentleness or patience. Mortified and disappointed she could not refrain from venting a part of her irritation on her two pertinacious admirers, and first by obtuseness to their speeches, and then by rebuffs to their polite attentions, she endeavoured to soothe herself, and weary them. Of the ill temper in which she was indulging she was totally unconscious, until, a considerable time having elapsed in mingled concord and discord, sweet sounds of music and irritation of temper, she suddenly perceived that she had a third auditor. Behind Alfred Van-

sittart Everard was standing and watching her.

She felt her cheeks glow, and unable to bear her prominent position, she closed her music book, pushed back her chair, and said with a laugh that she had played enough and could play no more.

The young men remonstrated, re-opened the book, and sorted her music in search of fresh pieces; and while they thus occupied themselves, Everard came round to her.

"I am going now," he said, "Mrs. Vansittart has taken my place. My mother likes to sit up for me, and I don't wish to be late. I have something to ask you before I go. You saw Hope in London, did you not?"

"Once. Only once. She only arrived just before we left London."

"Did she make a request to you?"

"Yes," Angela said blushing a little, "but. . . . . ."

"I hope you will be so kind as to attend to it," he said earnestly; "Hope told me she should ask you to come and see my mother, and I cannot help enforcing her request myself. It will be a kindness, a real charity if you will; for since Hope went, my mother is too much alone."

"Do you think she will see me?"

"I am almost sure she will, if you can make the attempt."

"Then I will."

There was a short silence, and then Everard said, "I believe I am very troublesome, but would it be possible to you to name the day. The reason I ask this is, that I may be at home when you come. If I tell my mother of your visit beforehand, it will make her nervous, but I think if I tell her you are *there*, she will be very wil-

ling to meet you. It is only for the first time."

"I am afraid I cannot go while the Vansittarts are here," Angela said after a moment's thought. "Will this day week do? I think I could manage it then, at about half-past three."

"Thank you. That will do perfectly. You see I presume on your kindness. Mr. Addison says," he added with a slight smile, "that you are anxious to do good. I am sure this is an opportunity."

Though nothing could be more unlike a lover's than his manner, it was so quiet, unembarrassed, and friendly, that Angela forgot for a moment all discomforts, and took courage to say softly, "Shall I find her very much changed."

"Yes, I fear so," he replied sadly. "Sorrow, such as she has suffered, leaves deep traces behind it." His own countenance

saddened as he spoke, and Angela did not dare to say more.

A moment afterwards he held out his hand, shook hers, and was gone as quickly as he had made his entrance into the room.

Angela could not analyze what she felt. When she did attempt to go over what had passed, to consider his looks and words, she believed his wish and intention was to return to a friendly intercourse, to show her how much he desired to be on friendly terms, but also to show that he had no other thoughts. For a time she felt that this was all she desired. If she could be friends with him, life must be happy; but alas! this conclusion did not suffice for more than a few hours. It soothed her sleep that night, but she woke up to other hopes in the morning.

The Vansittarts left Underwood on the

Saturday following, leaving, as Mr. Gresham observed to Angela, a great blank behind them. She did not agree, but she did not express her feelings. Among the many points in which she was improved, not the least was patience with her father. She could not submit her mind and opinions to his, and indeed it was little desirable she should, but she no longer made her home a battle scene between two opinions, and her home was the happier in consequence.

With a beaming smile Mr. Gresham received the news she now imparted to him, that she was going to see Mrs. Vavasour, and though he refrained from comment, it was evident that once again he looked upon his hopes as on the eve of fulfilment.

Attended by her aunt Angela drove to Audley Court and found Everard awaiting her. He assisted her from the carriage, and took her himself to his mother's room; walking by her side in silence indeed, yet

treating her with that quiet friendliness which could not do otherwise than set her at her ease in his presence. At the door he begged her to wait while he gained his mother's consent for her entrance, and then with a smile of encouragement, for he saw she was fluttering with the nervousness of this pause, made way for her to go in alone.

When she returned to the carriage she found him talking to Miss Price. He came forward to meet her, and holding out his hand, said warmly, "Thank you again and again. You have done a great kindness."

With a swelling heart and glowing cheeks, Angela re-entered the carriage, and it was only when they had driven away that she became conscious there had been nothing in his manner to encourage her aching heart.

He had been very grateful for his mother's sake, but he had made no use of the opportunity her visit gave him to renew his acquaintance with *her*. He had been silent when they were alone, and had made not even a momentary effort to retain her.

"How did you find Mrs. Vavasour, my love?" placidly inquired Miss Price, after a quarter of an hour of silence.

The inquiry broke the thread of Angela's selfish reflections, and she sadly answered, "Changed, very much changed. Her hair which had not a thread of grey is quite white, and the beautiful color she used to have in her cheeks is gone. Oh! Aunt Jane," she continued, almost passionately. "I sometimes think it would be better to live as you and I do, without having any one to care very much for, than to care, and then to lose it. It makes life too dreadful to think of."

"No, my love," said her Aunt, emphatically, "it is good for those indeed to whom God appoints it, but it would be a thankless thing to turn from the blessing for fear of the pain. He who gives the happiness can also give the power to bear its loss."

Angela sighed and from her heart, as she always did when forms of goodness and submission, that seemed to her unattainable, were placed before her eyes. Yet the question was not set at rest. Mrs. Vavasour's altered countenance haunted her for many days, and she tormented herself with inquiries, whether it were not better to be a stoic, than to care so much for what this life contains.

It was a very useless question in her case, since no efforts could have made a stoic of her.

CHAPTER VII.

Hope can disperse the thickest clouds of night
That fear hath overspread the soul withal;
And make the darkest shadows shine as bright
As the Sunbeams spread on a silver wall.

C. Hervey.

"Well, my dear child," said Mr. Merivale, "how are you?"

This enquiry was made the morning after his arrival, when he chanced to be left with Angela alone.

Mr. Merivale's visit took place about a month after the departure of the Vansittarts, and perhaps it will be as much to

the weariness of the reader to hear, as it was to the depression of Angela to know, that the hopes excited in the last chapter had faded during that month into nothing ness. She saw no more of Everard. When she went to Audley Court he was absent, and on the occasion of his single call at Underwood, Mr. Gresham was not at home. Since no good reason now prevented him from seeking her society, it was plain that the will was not there, and hope deferred was beginning to cast its deadly chill upon her heart.

"Quite well," she replied carelessly to Mr. Merivale's inquiry.

"I am very glad to hear that. I like a healthy woman."

"Then I am sure you must like me," Angela said, laughing at his dry manner. "My health is something quite incomprehensible."

"You speak as if you were a little disposed to quarrel with your health. Have you any strong desire to be in a dying state?"

"I am very thankful for my health of course," she replied, gravely; "but I cannot feel as my aunt wishes me to feel, that health is everything. It is very possible to be uncomfortable in mind even though one's health does happen to be good."

"Very possible, indeed, my love. Health of course is a thing to be very thankful for, and if you had such a pitiful body as mine, you would feel it more; but still health is not as you say everything, and we should be but poor creatures if it were. It is difficult to be happy and ill, but it is not at all difficult to be unhappy and well."

"Oh! what a pleasure it is to be understood," cried Angela warmly. "How glad I am to see you again."

"Is that your grief then, my poor child; the not being understood."

"I did not say I had any grief, did I?" she said perversely, longing for him to question her, and yet dreading it.

"No—but I have eyes and I can see, and I have intellect, and I can gather. You are not happy, are you?"

"I suppose I am quite as happy as most people. Books say, you know, that no one is quite happy in this world."

"Ah! Angela, but you and I never were satisfied with what books say. We see that some people are happy. And when they are not, we like to know the reason why."

Angela laughed but did not seem at all the more disposed to make confidences.

"Get your work, my dear child, and let us have a talk. I have come all the way from Italy for the sole purpose of having a talk with you, and after that you cannot be so un-

gracious as to refuse. Get your work and let us make the most of having the room to ourselves."

Angela obeyed.

"What is that?" he enquired, looking at the piece of work she unfolded.

"A very small baby's shirt," she replied, smiling.

"Oh; and what is that for?"

"Mr. Addison told me it would be good for my restless mind to work for the poor; and I do most things Mr. Addison advises."

"So should I if he were my spiritual pastor and master. He looks wise. I should like to know more of him. Get your father to ask him to dinner for me."

"Oh, yes, certainly; I am sure he will be glad."

"There was another person I took a

fancy to when last I was here—the second Mr. Vavasour. How is he?"

"Of course, Mr. Merivale," Angela replied, without raising her eyes, "you know his history."

"His having his brother's property—yes; your father wrote me word of that. How does he bear his honors?"

"You can see for yourself. I believe he dines here on Thursday."

"I am glad of that. I like to see people who have been placed in difficult circumstances. I look them through and through, and find out all their secrets."

"That is pleasant, certainly."

"Do you know, Angela, when last I was here I fancied that young man was in love with you. Is all that gone off?"

"How can I tell," she answered impatiently; "I suppose you know that papa refused him once."

"Why, yes, I heard that; but I confess I thought better of him than to expect he would be satisfied with such a rebuff. But the world is not what it was. In my youth people had more spirit, more feeling, more honor than now-a-days."

"As to that," Angela cried, her temper and her cheeks alike flaming high in his defence, "the way in which he was treated excuses him from any want of spirit or truth, if he *has* changed. I do not know that it would not have been want of spirit to persist. *I* would not have persisted if I had been treated as he has been."

"You mean *your* behaviour. Well, my dear child, I agree with you there. It was a bad business. And yet I think if I had been in the young gentleman's place, even that would not have daunted me. I should have thought you very weak;

but, knowing you as I do, not unfaithful."

"No, never," she cried, passionately.

Mr. Merivale rose from his chair, and coming towards her, patted her head. "Poor little thing," he said, kindly, "that was what I thought. Then how is it—has he forgotten you?"

"I cannot tell," she replied, drooping her head over her work, ashamed of her admission, yet unable to recall it. "Oh! Mr. Merivale, you must not scorn me."

"Scorn! Angela, and why should I scorn?"

"I scorn myself. I scorn every woman who gives her love to those who don't prize it."

"And yet though you scorn you are constant. Is that it, my dear child?"

"If it is to be constant," she said, with a kind of *abandon* in her tone, "to have no

other thought by day or night—to care for no pleasant thing—to look forward to no future hope—to find myself at my age joyless, and hopeless, and all because of . . . . Oh! how you will scorn me," she continued, arresting her excited words. "I have tried not to be constant, but the more I try the worse it is. There now you have made me speak, and now you know what I am."

"Yes, but you have told me nothing I did not see. Don't be afraid, my dear child, you need not mind an old friend who was once a constant fool, with far less reason than you have. Well, I will see this Mr. Vavasour."

"See him," and Angela almost screamed with terror. "Mr. Merivale, what would you do?"

"Poor little fool," he said, fondly. "I would do nothing, you may be sure. You are far too precious to be forced on any

man. I meant see with my eyes. Look him through and through, and when I have found out his secrets. . . . . " he paused.

"What!" Angela exclaimed, anxiously.

"I shall keep them to myself. Don't expect to hear anything from me. What I discover by dint of the intellect God has blessed me with, I consider as sacred as if it were revealed to me by confession. You may trust me. My mind is like the depths of the sea, strewed with treasures in the shape of secrets, never to be revealed; yours is among them, and so will his be."

"If there be one."

"Why, yes, if there be one; and now in good time here comes my niece and your aunt. Very unsuitable companions. Your aunt is as mild as a dove, but Janet has nothing dovelike about her. I wish she had. I like a soft woman, even when she has as little intellect as your aunt.

Well, Janet," addressing himself to a young lady of eight or nine and twenty, black eyed and black haired, and looking as sharp as a needle. "What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Making acquaintance," she replied. "I am never comfortable in a place till I have made acquaintance; are you Miss Gresham? I don't mean with persons but things. Now, I know my way about, I know how to get to my room in the shortest time, I know the names of the pictures, and how to find a book when I want it; in short, thanks to Miss Price's kindness, I am comfortable, which I was not till this moment."

"I am sorry for that," said Angela, laughing. "I could have made you so last night, if I had but known."

"One is prepared for one night's discomfort," she replied, in the same tone. "Are we welcome here?" And she looked about

her with bright keen eyes like her uncle's; only, as he said, without softness in them. "You and my uncle seemed to be in deep talk."

"Yes," and Angela blushed a little. "Mr. Merivale is a good talker and a kind one."

"Too kind. That is his fault. If he would but see the world as it is, I should think much more highly of him. Is it not so?" she said, putting her hand playfully on his shoulder. "Don't you own that good nature blinds your eyes."

"I don't attempt to compete with you, certainly," he said, drily, "but it may be, because it pleases me better to find virtues than faults."

"But it *should* please you only to find what exisits, and you know faults are more plentiful than virtues," and Janet Merivale set herself down to argue, an occupation in

which she delighted, and in which also she excelled, for she had quick and original thoughts, and a temper that could not be ruffled.

Everard had been for the third time invited to dine at Underwood, and for the second time had accepted the invitation. New expectation for Angela and new disappointment. An old lord from a distance had, somewhat to his surprise, also accepted Mr. Gresham's invitation to dine on the same evening, and even the desire to do honor to Everard had been forced to give way to his claims. Angela went into dinner with the old lord, and had the mortification of seeing Everard as conversible with Janet Merivale as he had been with Miss Vansittart, and judging from appearances, more really amused and interested in her conversation. She thought she at last understood him. He now received from many that

notice, which once had been the charm that won him to think of *her;* he was looking about in the world, and saw many worthy of his affection, and she was nothing. It was a very bitter thought, and very bitter on that evening was her frame of mind.

A slight hope rose again when the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room. Mr. Gresham was talking to the old lord and Everard was left at peace, and for a moment she fancied he looked as if he were coming towards her. If it were so his purpose was arrested. He was called by Mr. Gresham to join *his* conference, and the old lord—who had told Angela at dinner that he was anxious to gain Mr. Vavasour's co-operation in some plan of benevolent intention,—laid hold of him, drew some papers from his pocket, and finally led him out of the room to a smaller adjoining one, where

a discussion and examination could be carried on more at leisure.

Disappointment, disappointment. It was but a slight addition to the many her latter life had afforded, but it seemed so cruel a one, that tears of pity for herself came into her eyes.

She looked up fearful of being observed, and met the kind, compassionate glance of Mr. Merivale. Kind as it was, however, his watchfulness vexed her, and her vexation on that account roused her spirit, and made her determine to be a slave to her feelings no more. She got up, and to give time to her eyes to forget their tears, busied herself in fetching and preparing some work, and then sitting down at a table where Janet Merivale was seated, entered with interest into her conversation.

She was a talker and a good one, and several persons were standing about her.

When Angela sat down she was praising a novel that had just come out. She turned to Angela with an eager inquiry as to whether she had read it.

"Yes, there it is," Angela said, pointing to a book on another table, "but I did not like it at all. It made me wretched."

"Wretched, but why? There are no romantic sorrows in it; that is why I like it. We have novels more than enough with romantic sorrows, but this is clever, it is like life."

"That is, it thinks it is," replied Angela, "but if it *were*, the world would be as unbearable as the book. Does it please you to think society as false and heartless as that book describes."

"Everything pleases me that is *real*. Of course I should be glad that the world was better than it is, but since it is not, I like to see it as it is. Romantic pictures of the

world, with heroes and heroines in them, are no better than fairy tales. Give me truth, however severe."

"I thought *I* was severe upon the world," Angela said, laughing, "but now I find I am very mild. I plainly say that if the world is such a place as that book makes it appear, I would rather die at once and be out of it."

"And if Miss Gresham dies, I will die too," said the mortally offended youth, with a small attempt at a complimentary badinage.

"But Miss Gresham does not mean to die," said another gentleman, "for she knows the book's picture is false, and so do I. It has chosen to depict certain classes of people, and the worst specimens of each class. Now we all know that there are false and heartless people in the world, but happily also we do know some few with

feeling, and some few that are true. And if each of us is happy enough to know a few, the sum total will not be insignificant."

"But I deny the fact," said Janet Merivale, eagerly. "I know hardly any one that *I* call true; and other virtues are just as rare. Now, Miss Gresham, let us question you. I think you are true, and I think my uncle is true, but I know no one else of whom I could speak as decidedly; no one who would not say a false or an equivocating thing if the temptation were strong. Do you know a true person? Give me an example. I like examples. General facts are nothing."

"I could give several," Angela said, "but I don't mean to do it. If I pick out a few I might seem to impute falseness to others. I am happy to say I do know many people on whose truth I entirely depend.

"We must take your word of course,

Miss Gresham, and be content," cried Janet, "although we might throw a doubt on nameless individuals; but let us go on to other virtues. What do you think of natural affection? Do you think the world shines in that particular. What remark does one hear on all sides at a London party. 'Look at so and so! *how* indecent! her sister only died a month ago;' or 'Lady So and So out again! Is it possible! I heard she was heartbroken for the loss of her son.' Is it not true?" she cried, appealing all round. "Am I saying what is false?"

"No," said several laughing, "I am afraid not."

"Only that the very remarks seem to contradict you. We only remark on what is *un*common," Angela said.

"I doubt the fact, but I will be generous and give you the benefit of the doubt. But let me proceed. Do you admire the virtue

of constancy. I do. I am not romantic, but I do admire constancy. Well, what do you say to that as a common virtue?"

"Oh! as to constancy," Angela said, bitterly, all the disappointments and mortifications of months kindling in her mind into one outburst of indignant feeling. "I give up to you at once. We read of constancy in those romantic books you talk of, but as to real life, I very much doubt if it is to be found."

A something indescribable, for it was not a sound made her suddenly turn her head. Everard and the old lord stood at a little distance behind her. The light was bright, and though at a distance she could see that Everard's eyes were intently fixed upon her, and that his cheek was pale.

She turned back her head, shame and regret dyeing her face with crimson. It was all the work of an instant.

Janet Merivale was far too quick not to see that something had ruffled the surface of the life before her, but she had also perfect tact, and she continued without a pause; "Very well, then there is nothing more to be said on that score; let us proceed to some other question. What do you say to kindness and goodnature? Do you think we are to our neighbours' faults a little blind? and to their virtues very kind?"

"No, Janet," said her uncle coming up to the table, possibly with the intention of giving Angela more time to recover herself. "Nobody can accuse us of that; especially after they have heard us this evening."

"You had no business to listen to me," she said with playful good humour, "but you have only proved the truth of what I said. Are you to my faults a little

blind? Have you done your best to hide them?"

The conversation proceeded merrily, and after a time Angela recovered herself enough to join in it; but her very heart was trembling and vibrating with emotion. What had he thought of her? What could he think?

Later in the evening, when Mr. Gresham had made up his whist party, and Mr. Merivale and Mr. Addison were engaged in conversation, Everard, who had been listening to them for a time, slowly left them, and sat down opposite to Angela by Janet Merivale's side.

If he had been discomposed, he was so no longer, and he addressed himself to Janet with ease and quietness. "You were mentioning several books at dinner Miss Merivale, with approbation. Could you write me down a few names? I read a good deal

to my mother, and I am always glad to hear of something new; new and good that is to say."

"I shall be delighted, if Miss Gresham will give me a pencil and a bit of paper. What shall I write? What kind of book. What have you been reading of late."

"Nothing very new," Everard said smiling. "I don't know what you will think of me if I confess it was *Clarendon's Rebellion*. It is a favorite book of my mother's, and as I had never read it, it was like a romance to me; but it is done, and I should be glad of something a little less ancient now."

"Are you too wise for a novel?" she asked, after writing a few names.

"Not at all." There was a silence while she wrote, and considered, and wrote again; and before she had finished, Everard, with a slight glow on his cheek, said to Angela

across the table, "Do you ever read *Camilla* now, Miss Gresham?"

"No not lately," she said hurriedly; too much startled by his suddenly and pointedly addressing her, to perceive the drift of his question.

"Did you ever read it?" he said to Janet Merivale.

"I have read it I am sure. Oh! yes, I remember it now very well. It is a pretty book. Camilla is charming, and Edgar—oh! Miss Gresham, if there were many Edgars in the world, I should not have given the opinion of mankind I lately did."

A strange remembrance was carrying Angela back to an olden time, and she could not make up her mind to speak. Her heart was beating so fast, she almost felt its throbbing must be heard.

"Your opinion is the same then as Miss

Gresham's," Everard said in a firm grave voice. "I remember she once expressed her admiration of Edgar's character in much the same terms as yours, but in my opinion, Edgar failed in one of the first of virtues—*trust*. I do not call his love for Camilla perfect, or knowing what she was, he would have trusted her, however appearances might have seemed to condemn."

He did not look towards Angela, he spoke to Janet, but Angela felt the words thrill through her from head to foot.

Janet's quickness again perceived that such serious words must have meaning in them, but she answered readily, "I quite agree with you, but I am afraid the virtue is rare. We all give each other up at the very first rub. I am afraid I do so quite as much as my neighbours. I cannot have patience with appearances."

"If I were a preacher," Everard said

lightly, "I should preach on the subject, so strongly do I feel. But may I now look at your list? A thousand thanks for it," he added, as he glanced over the paper. "Some of these I am sure we shall like."

A slight discussion ensued with Janet over the names, and he then looked at his watch, and went to ask Mr. Addison if he was ready to go. He came back to wish both the young ladies good night, and without further attempt to impress or catch Angela's attention, went away.

After a few minutes silence, Janet Merivale observed to Angela, "I think if I lived much in Mr. Vavasour's society, I should considerably modify my opinion of human nature."

"I think you would," Angela said, now perfectly composed and unembarrassed. "As to truth especially."

"Why, yes. His countenance is as clear

as daylight. I liked what he said about trust," she continued thoughtfully. "I felt it to rebuke me; for I know I am distrustful of good. I think I should trust him whatever might be his conduct, and what a blessed thing it is to feel entire dependence, even for a moment.

"Yes," Angela replied, and a whole heart and life was in the monosyllable.

Mr. Merivale said no more to Angela regarding Everard or her feelings, until the morning of his departure. He then gravely laid his hand on her arm, and beckoned her to follow him into a window, at a distance from the place where his niece and her aunt were standing.

"You are happier, my dear child," he then said looking into her eyes, "and you do not need words from me to reveal secrets or to explain mysteries."

"Oh! Mr. Merivale, what does it all

mean?" she asked with anxious, earnest enquiry.

He made no answer, but drew her towards him and kissed her forehead. "Forgive that from an old man, my child," he said fondly. "I do not much think, Angela, I shall be very long in this world, but if it were right to make a prayer to Him, who knows best when to call us away, I should pray to live until . . . . . ." he paused.

With tearful but enquiring eyes, she looked up in his face, silently asking him when.

"Until that is accomplished, which for your welfare and happiness I alike desire. We must have patience, Angela. You and I both. And now God bless you."

He kissed her again, and went straight back to his niece, despatching Angela with

his usual kind thoughtfulness to fetch her father, that she might hide the agitation his words had caused her from the piercing eyes of Janet Merivale.

CHAPTER VIII.

Passive she heard, and in her labouring mind
Strove with the dark enigma, "Part! to part!"
Till having solved it by the beams that broke
From that clear soul on hers; struggling she spoke.
King Arthur.

THE autumn slipped away, the winter came, and nothing worth recording took place. The relations between Everard and Angela continued exactly in the same state as they had been before that last evening's occurrence. No looks, no words, no empressement, meetings few, and when

meetings occurred, manners calm, kind, and friendly, but distant.

One morning in December, Mr. Gresham entered the drawing-room, where Angela was engaged in reading to Miss Price, and observed that he was come for a few moments' conversation. He then placed himself with his back to the fire, and looked at his daughter with a stare of unusual solemnity.

"Be so good as to attend to me, my love," he began. "I have something of importance to observe."

Angela's heart beat with only too ready expectation, and she laid down her work and cast down her eyes.

"I believe, Angela, you have been fully aware of all the purposes and motives which induced me to make choice of Mr. Vavasour for your husband. Motives, I must observe, of singular generosity towards him, and pur-

poses which it would be unbecoming in me too highly to exalt. Suffice it to say, that the plan was laid with as much foresight and wisdom, as the motives which impelled me were beneficent. You have been, I say, fully aware of my feelings in this matter; and once for all, my love, I must assure you, that with *your* conduct I have no fault to find. You have behaved with dutiful submission towards myself, and with perfect modesty towards Mr. Vavasour. I thank you for it, and assure you that it has been highly gratifying to my feelings."

He paused, and stood for a moment, the benign and grateful parent; then again assuming the character of the wise and watchful guardian, he proceeded.

"It is now nearly eighteen months since Mr. Vavasour was entitled by his position to claim my notice. He is perfectly aware of my favourable intentions towards him-

self. None can accuse me of want of patience in my dealings with him. I have allowed for the natural influence of decorous sorrow; I have excused the resentment he may possibly have felt in the recollection of certain circumstances. I have allowed for every feeling which the most fastidious delicacy can have suggested. But in vain. It is now my intention, therefore, to resign my long cherished designs, and to dismiss the subject from my mind."

Angela turned first red, then pale, but she made no exclamation.

"I wish you to understand me, my love. When I say that I dismiss the subject from my mind, my wish is of course to suggest to you the course I desire you to adopt. I request that you will banish from your affections every recollection of Mr. Vavasour, and prepare your mind to receive any future impressions it may be my will to recommend to you."

"I cannot," Angela said faintly but firmly.

"You made an observation, my love."

"I cannot," she repeated.

"I do not perfectly understand you. It is not, I believe, customary with a young female of delicacy to obtrude her affections on any man. Let me suggest to you, my love, that such sentiments are highly indecorous."

"He loved me once," Angela said in the same low tone.

"Certainly, my love. It was the conviction of his attachment which led me so quickly to adopt him in the place of his brother; which led me to anticipate that he would joyfully accept the transfer of my intentions. But man, my love, is liable to change, and it is evident that Mr. Vavasour, however estimable may be his character, is subject to the common caprices of humanity. I must, therefore, again urge upon you the

necessity of banishing the expectations I have hitherto encouraged, and of displacing his image from your mind."

"I think he loves me still," she said breathlessly.

"Indeed! may I enquire on what grounds this conviction is formed? Have there been any secret tokens of remembrance? gifts, notes, looks, words, delicate suggestions of attachment? Let me beg of you, my love, to be open with me."

"None," she replied, slowly shaking her head.

"On what then, I again enquire, is your conviction formed?"

"I feel it," she replied. "That is all; and I think he would not let me feel it if it were false. I trust him."

Mr. Gresham looked much perplexed. He cleared his throat, took two or three turns about the room, and then resumed his place.

"As I am anxious, my love, to banish this subject from our minds at once and for ever, I must relate to you an occurrence which took place last year, and which circumstances alone have hitherto led me to conceal. Anxious to secure your best welfare, and uncertain, whether Mr. Vavasour in his natural modesty, might fully understand the favorable change in my sentiments, I visited him about six weeks after our return hither, and made him a formal offer of your hand, not concealing from him . . . . . giving him in short, every encouragement—I might even say more than this—which the delicacy of a parent would permit him to give. I regret to have to inform you that he entirely disclaimed any desire to ally himself with my house, and that, in terms it was impossible for me to misunderstand."

Angela became as pale as death. Shame, horror, doubt, and despair, for a moment

took possession of her heart, and expressed themselves on her speaking countenance.

"I am sorry, my love, to give you pain," said Mr. Gresham with kindness, "but in such circumstances it is most fitting that the truth should be told. You are now possessed of all the facts of the case, and undoubtedly will readily acquiesce in my request, that the expectations which have hitherto occupied our minds should be banished. As to the future it yet remains to make such arrangements as may seem most desirable for your well-being."

There was a short silence, and then Angela looked up at her father with a steady countenance, and said gravely, "Papa, I trust him still."

Mr. Gresham, who had anticipated a totally different conclusion, looked what he felt, the picture of astonishment. "My love," at last he mildly said, "allow me to remind

you that romantic fancies are unbecoming in a young female of sense and delicacy. I had hoped that I had made this clear to your mind. Since I have failed, I must request you to allow me a few moments private conversation with your aunt, who will, I am convinced, join with me in endeavouring to dissuade you from a prepossession unbecoming to a modest young woman."

"It will be in vain, Papa," Angela replied. "I have said it, I trust him, and until he is married to another, I *will* trust him. For what cause he withholds the expression of his feelings I cannot guess, but my conviction is unalterable. He loved me once, and I believe he loves me still. Leave me in peace, Papa," she continued rising from her seat, "and I think you will not be disappointed." Mr. Gresham had taken his place opposite to Miss Price, previous to his entering on his purposed private conversation

with her. Angela just paused to press her lips on his brow, a very unusual mark of submission and confidence, and hastened from the room.

"Extremely singular," observed Mr. Gresham to Miss Price. "May I ask you what opinion you have formed on this subject?"

"I have long thought," she gently replied, "that God has made them for each other."

"Ahem! Well, Miss Price, since such is your opinion, I bow to it, and reserving to myself the right to interfere, should any more advantageous alliance offer itself, I will consent for a few months longer to wait upon Mr. Vavasour's pleasure. You must, however, allow me again to observe that I consider the case extremely singular."

"No doubt," she agreed placidly, and so ended the conference.

That afternoon, although it was a very stormy December afternoon, Mr. Gresham rode again to the top of the hill, to survey the fair scene, fair even in the raw winter's day, and thought it fairer than ever because, seen through the hazy atmosphere, the limits of the two properties seemed to melt away into a boundless space. His chest heaved with renewed ardour as he gazed, and once again, flitting dreams, vague and uncertain ones, vanished, and left the old idol in undisputed sway.

"Upon the whole, Angela," he observed to his daughter that evening as he kissed her, "you may be right. The case is singular, but the worth of the object makes it desirable to wait, even though the hope be an uncertain one."

Her heart agreed, but she made no reply beyond a blush. She was not blind, she was not indifferent to the position, it might

be the humiliating position in which she had placed herself; but she had in some respects a heroic spirit. She thought he had asked for trust, and she gave it with her whole heart. Moments of fluttering, of weakness, of doubt, of hopelessness, there were, there must have been, or she could not have been the wayward, changeful creature she was; but from every doubt, and every struggle, the trust arose again and again triumphant, and bore her along the months of silence and vacancy that followed.

CHAPTER IX.

. . . . Mercy which had seem'd
A gift reserved to God, was mine to grant.
So love flowed on me from a thousand springs
And pour'd itself around me like a flood.'

The Eve of the Conquest.

In the July of the following year a son was born to Hope and Robert.

The event took place in obedience to Everard's earnest request at Audley Court. Supposing this request to be made out of care and thought for Hope's bodily comfort, and unwilling to refuse one to whom he owed so much, Robert acquiesced, but he

wondered the request had ever been made, and he owned to Hope that he had never more reluctantly agreed to any petition. Since his marriage, his feelings in regard to the past, had acquired, perhaps naturally, a keenness they had not exhibited before. To Everard, however, no reluctance was shown; to Audley Court, Robert brought his wife, and there their child was born.

On the evening of the day of his birth, Robert and Everard sat alone in the drawing-room, for Mrs. Vavasour, tearful, trembling, and excited, could not be torn from the cradle of the new-born child, and seemed about to lavish on Robert's son, all that adoring love with which she had cherished him.

Both brothers were thoughtful, and both, as once before they had done, armed themselves with books for the better indulgence of their thoughts.

From his seat at a distance, Everard stealthily watched Robert. Robert's excitable feelings had been much touched during the day, and the ardent and devoted affection he felt for his wife had been fully manifested. When his son was born, he had seemed for a time transported with joy, but now a shade of thought had gathered over his face, and more than once he pushed his hair from his brow, as if there was a weight he desired to remove. This thoughtful expression was no longer a rare one, and if to his uncommon beauty an added charm had been wanted, it was now given. The play of countenance was more varied, the softness more intense, the animation more sparkling.

At last, Everard laid down his book on his knee, and said gravely, "I should think Robert it was a very responsible thing to feel *a father*."

"Yes, I suppose it is." Robert spoke hastily, almost sharply; as if to have done with it.

Everard took up his book and said no more. He was very sensitive,—for a man too sensitive—to a rebuff, yet it was not altogether wounded feelings which called a shadow to his brow.

Robert looked at him two or three times uneasily, and then tossed down his own book and said, "Now for it, Everard. I did not feel quite up to a lecture just then, but I am ready now. Go on, you are quite right about fathers, and I shall be glad to hear what you have to say."

"But I am sure I am not prepared to speak," Everard said laughing. "I have never turned my thoughts at all in the direction of a father's duties."

"Then what did you mean to say?"

"A thought that struck me, nothing

more. I thought it must be a strange feeling to feel a father, to have a creature all one's own, to guide and influence; that was all."

"Not quite all, Everard! you wished me to say *I* felt it also!"

Everard coloured, but then replied with a smile, "Yes, Robert, I believe that is the truth, since you will have it. I am sure I did not say it lecturingly, for what on earth have I to do with lecturing on a father's feelings, but I think I hoped you would say "yes."

"I can say thus much," Robert replied, with feeling. "If with a wife like mine, and now a child dependent on me, I do not keep in the right way, I shall be the greatest villain on this earth. I hope, I trust, too great a villain for me to be, or indeed to have ever been. Are you satisfied?"

Everard nodded his head and then asked carelessly, "Have you thought of the name, yet?"

"No," Robert replied, and so the conversation dropped.

Hope's recovery though satisfactory was slow. It was a good thing, the doctor observed to Robert, that she was brought into the country; and Robert repeated the observation to Everard, and thanked him for having insisted on it.

"Come and look at the little creature to-day," he added, as he stood with his brother on the stairs. "I hate babies, and I dare say you do, but this *is* rather different from babies in general; it has got on a smart cap to-day, and altogether, I must say, it is rather a pretty thing."

Robert's pride in his little son was very great; though remembering his old antipathy to babies, he was half ashamed to

shew it. He now conducted his brother into the room where it was lying. It had been laid down outside its bassinet and a young girl was watching it while the nurse was absent. Robert despatched the girl on a message, and said he would stay till she came back.

The child was now nearly a month old, and in its fair innocent face as it slept, it was not difficult to see a likeness to its mother. It might have made a pretty picture to see the two tall men bending over the little cradle.

"It is not so bad, is it, Everard?" Robert said, a touching expression of fatherly fondness shining in his handsome face.

"I think it is very pretty," was Everard's reply; after a moment, he added gravely, "Robert, I think we must have a celebration of its birth. The first heir, you know."

"No, no," Robert said, and a crimson flush overspread his cheeks. "No, no." he added in a low voice. "No mockery, poor little thing."

The girl returned, and the brothers left the room; Robert walking fast as if to escape from Everard; but Everard pursued him.

"Robert," he said, as they entered the library together, "I meant what I said. Your child is the heir. You must not forbid me to celebrate his birth."

"Poor child," Robert said with a painful smile, "a mockery of an heir. No," he added, with some vehemence, "I will not consent to it."

"And why a mockery of an heir? Can you suppose I should mock your child?"

Robert looked up in his brother's grave face. "Everard," he asked quickly, and with agitation, "what do you mean?"

You cannot intend to live single because of this, and if you have a son. . . ."

"He shall never suffer the torture his father has suffered," Everard passionately said.

"There was a silence, and then Robert repeated, "I cannot consent to it."

"You must," he replied, with that stubborn decision against which it was idle to rebel.

"Tell me this," Robert asked, impatiently, "don't you mean to marry?"

"Whether I marry or not,—which is an act that concerns only myself, and about which I do not wish to speak,—my decision is unalterably made; your child shall be the heir."

"You are determined to humble me," Robert said, standing before the empty fire-place, and leaning his head against the marble.

"Never, dear Robert; but only determined to fulfil what I am certain was my father's will. Let us say no more, only tell me in one word that you consent to my wish."

As no dissent came, Everard left the room, and the subject was not raised again. Robert repeated nothing of what had passed even to his wife; and regarding the coming celebration, Everard only said to his mother that when Hope was well, and the child christened, he should give a dinner to the tenantry.

"Will Robert like it?" she asked anxiously.

"He consents," was Everard's reply, and she said no more. Yet there was a grave look in both brother's faces that made her anxious she scarcely knew why.

It was the middle of August before

Everard could perform his intentions. As soon as he saw that Hope was well enough to bear the fatigue, he named the day, and then quietly made his preparations, saying little to any one. It was only two days before the festivities took place that his mother discovered how much was going to be done, and on discovering it, shewed some reluctance to be present. But Everard's request was too earnest to allow of resistance, and at length she gave way.

He then said, "I wrote this morning to invite Mr. and Miss Gresham, and they accept. Dear mother, you will not mind, will you? they are not strangers."

"No, Everard," she replied, looking in his face enquiringly, "and I only wish they were somewhat less of strangers to us."

He coloured, but made no reply.

In the middle of August the weather is generally fine, and it was fine now on the

day for which fine weather was much required.

It is not intended here to dwell on the festivities that took place. To one portion of them alone attention is requested.

On a piece of lawn-like ground close to the house, a long table was spread, for the principal tenantry and tradespeople of the Vavasour family to receive their portion of good cheer on this day of rejoicing. They dined with much pleasure and comfort to themselves, and when dinner was over Everard requested them to remain seated, as he had a health to give.

He had before sent to summon Hope and her child, his mother, and Mr. and Miss Gresham, and they now appeared on the lawn. Robert and Mr. Addison were already there.

Hope instinctively placed herself by Robert and they stood a little apart.

Mr. Gresham and Miss Price seated themselves, with Angela standing near them, in another place. Everard took his mother's arm and drew her to a chair half hidden in the shade of a large tree. To please him and Robert, and because once more appearing in the world, she had this day laid aside her widow's cap; and though the ravages which grief had made, were, now that she resumed her former self, very apparent, there was a touching beauty about her, which years and grief, though they changed, seemed to have no power to efface. The lines

> Nor spring nor summer's beauty has such grace
> As I have seen in an autumnal face,

might have been addressed to her, and so her sons felt as they looked at her.

"Dear Mother," Everard said, his voice slightly agitated, as he placed her in a

chair. "Forgive me, if I speak of things that must give you pain to-day. It must be done."

She looked up at him and her lips quivered.

"I know, dear Mother, you will feel it," he continued, "but I *must* have you here and it *must* be done. So forgive me."

She put her hand in his, and then leant back in the shade where he had placed her.

Everard then walked to the head of the table, and in a few brief words, proposed the health of his nephew, Richard Vavasour.

It was received with enthusiasm. Everard had long overcome the ill will of his tenantry, was loved, blest, and trusted in by all, but there was a soft place in every heart where Robert's image lingered, and their love for him burst forth, in their reception of his infant son.

"They are very kind, Everard," Robert

said, with a misty light shining in his eyes, "must I thank them?"

Everard had retreated for a few seconds to where Robert stood, but now said, "No. I will do that."

And when the noise subsided he again stood at the table, and took off his hat.

"I have taken upon myself," he began with a smile, "to thank you all, in the name of one who cannot thank you for himself; and I assure you your welcome to him his given me a pleasure I shall not easily forget. There are others here who thank you for it also, but in some respects, my thanks are due to you more than theirs, for you have proved to me that I shall act rightly in a decision I have made. Will you all give me your attention for a few minutes while I speak of some events that are passed, but not I hope forgotten by any of you."

He paused, and the long line of eager eyes were fixed upon him, while a silence like the repose of a death chamber followed.

"It is now more than two years," he began again in a firm but solemn tone, "since it pleased God to take to Himself my dear father. You all know what followed that event. You all know for what cause I came to stand to you, in my brother's stead. I say I believe you know it; but lest you should not all perfectly know, let me repeat it now. My father loved you all, and loved the honour and virtue of his house more than life or any earthly tie; and when he feared that one of his race, the one on whom his honours ought to have fallen, had left that path of strict integrity in which he and his fathers had trodden, he shewed what most he loved, by cutting off *him* the dearest of all, from

his natural rights; and placing *me*—in all but one respect, the love of him and his virtues, far inferior—in my brother's place. He thought it his duty and it was done; but the effort broke his heart. You know the rest. I obeyed his will. I never had disobeyed him. I could not disobey his last request." Everard paused again and drew a breath of relief as if a painful task was done; and then while the same breathless silence continued, proceeded.

"You may think it is not for a brother to dwell on a brother's errors; nor would they have been dwelt upon, were it not that they have since been so nobly redeemed, that to speak of them is to honour not to condemn. You, each and all of you, who know as I myself know how weak is human will, can do honour to him who breaks the bonds of temptation, and rises never to fall again. For this cause I ask of you all to honour

my brother. The time has passed when my father's will bound me. I have obeyed it as you all know; and had it been binding still, I would, cost what it might, still have obeyed it; but his will points me now to another course, and I fulfil it. I lay down the burden he laid upon me, never, *such is my unalterable determination*, to take it again; and I *know* that I have his blessing on the act. I thank you all for having borne with me during these two years—with my ignorance, and with my—perhaps in your eyes—mistaken, sense of duty,—and I wish you all happiness under your rightful master. I give the health of Robert Vavasour."

Everard withdrew from the table. Trembling and tearful his mother rose to meet him, and came and laid her hand on his arm. They stood thus together while cheers springing from the inmost hearts of all present, rent the air—a noise of joy, emo-

tion, and surprise that seemed as if it never could cease.

When it did cease, Robert was unable to speak. Feelings, many and strange; old recollections, present emotions, and future hopes, overcame him; and he wept like a child. He touched his wife's arm and murmured, "Speak for me, Hope."

She looked intently, first at him, and then at Everard, and then walked steadily with her child in her arms, to the head of the table. Gentle, modest, and retiring as she was, she made no opposition to his request; acceding to it, and complying with it for his sake, as simply as in the performance of her daily duties.

A faint colour went and came on her pale cheek, and at the first words her voice was low; but it steadied as she went on, and the sweet tones were heard, clear and distinct, to the furthest end of the table.

"My husband thanks you all; and so do I for him; and if indeed it must be as his brother says, be sure you shall not regret the change; for his prayer to God will be that he may follow in his and in his father's steps, while life is given him."

She was moving from the table, when Mr. Addison, to whom Robert had just spoken, approached her, and after whispering something led her back.

With a deepening glow, for this was an act not so much in Robert's stead, as from herself, she said, "I give Mr. Everard Vavasour's health. It is not for me to praise him. You all know what he is. May God bless him."

She drew back, and Mrs. Vavasour left Everard to hasten to her side.

Everard stood for a moment alone; and as the noise of the shouting fell on his ear, that cheer which was for him;—a cheer the

loudest and heartiest perhaps of all, for there is no spirit so dull that cannot feel sympathy with actions like his—a strange, an unexpected sensation for a single instant agitated his breast; it was in the remembrance that from those, for whom he had done so much, and into whose welfare he had so warmly entered, he had severed himself for ever.

To escape from the unwelcome intruder he turned his head to where Angela stood, and saw her pale, trembling, breathless, watching him. He forgot himself, forgot spectators, and self-restraint, and approaching her with an *abandon* of manner, utterly unlike his usual self, and with such a smile as never before perhaps had played on his lips, he said, "Have I done right, Angela?"

The suddenness, the exciting circumstances of the day, this unexpected end to her long suspense, most of all that smile,

and that look from his eyes, entirely overcame her. She turned deadly pale, and the next moment fell flat on the grass.

Mr. Addison laid his hand on Everard's arm, and seeing him hardly master of himself, drew him away, reminding him of the necessity of acknowledging the cordial reception of his health; he obeyed with a smile of thanks, while Mr. Gresham and Mrs. Vavasour raised Angela, and led her to the house.

"The heat of the atmosphere," Mr. Gresham observed, as they walked along.

But Mrs. Vavasour knew better, and as she endeavoured to restore Angela to herself, she drew her caressingly towards her with a mother's affection.

"Well I never!" at length exclaimed Mrs. Allen, who with several of the other servants stood at a distance and contemplated the scene.

"It's the very thing I should have done myself," said the young groom, "only I don't think I should ever have thought of it."

"No, Thomas," said Betsey, "that you wouldn't, nor nobody wouldn't but Mr. Everard. To think, poor dear, that he has had this in his mind all along!"

"So we have got a new master again," said Harrison, approaching the cluster of servants with an empty beer jug in his hand, "or I should rather say our old one back again. You were a little surprised, Mrs. Allen, I should imagine."

"Not more than you were, Mr. Harrison," she replied, for Mrs. Allen always spoke her mind.

"I'm not so very sure of that," he said confidentially; "I'm pretty sharp, and when I heard of this celebration here, I said to myself a hundred times, that something would come of it. What do you say to

the change, Roger?" turning to the old coachman. "Does it have your approbation?"

"I say God bless them both," replied the old man with a tear in his eye, "and He will bless them. Of that I am certain!"

"Amen," said Harrison in a hearty tone.

"And Miss Gresham too, I hope, poor dear," said Betsey softly. "She looks graver than she used to do, and I should like to see the old smile again."

"We're hardly a match for her now," observed Harrison, shaking his head with an air of wisdom. "Wealth likes to go to Wealth."

"Then it ought to be ashamed of itself," said Betsey warmly, "and so I would tell Mr. Gresham to his face."

"And so would I," said the young groom. "I would tell him that he may look the world over, before he'll find as good as Mr.

Everard. I would though he put me into the stocks for it."

"Mrs. Allen! you've wanted," said a breathless boy running from the house to the group. "Missus wants the salverlattlely for Miss Gresham."

"Poor dear!" sighed Betsey as she accompanied Mrs. Allen on her way. "I don't think it's the salvolatile that will do her good."

CHAPTER X.

Wait, my faith is large in Time
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
TENNYSON.

THAT night Everard and Robert fought out a great battle, but there never was an instant's doubt as to how it would end. When Robert at last saw that his words were vain, he behaved like himself; with the same touching humility and winning grace receiving back his position, as he had shewn in submitting to its loss.

There was only one countenance on which Everard looked with doubt. Of Hope's approbation he was not certain. In every other face, high and low, rich and poor, (with the exception of Mr. Gresham's,) he saw a full and heartfelt approval, and appreciation of what he had done.

When fatigued with the excitement of the day, Hope early left the drawing-room to go to bed, Everard followed her.

"Dear Hope forgive me," he said, catching her hand, "I know I ought to have asked your advice in this matter, but I was afraid. I was afraid you would dissuade me. I could not run the chance, but now I must have your consent. Are you not contented?"

"Quite now," she replied after a moment's thought. "At first, I will confess it was a shock. We are so happy now, Robert is so anxious, so careful, so good; I felt to shrink

from the change; but you have done more than right, Everard, and such actions must bring blessings with them, and I am content."

"There is no fear for Robert, Hope; no more at least than such fear as there is for us all; we must have done with distrust, and look up to him with confidence and honor. I do from my heart. I am like the angels in Heaven," he added with a sweet, touching smile. "There is nothing on earth to my mind so great and noble as repentance."

"And you have saved him. Dear, dear Everard, it has pleased God to make it all your work, and it will be your example that will guide him now." And with tears of grateful affection, Hope took his hand in both hers, and kissed it. If there were anything to repay he was well repaid.

"And now, Everard," she asked looking

up with a smile in his face, "may I ask, do you mean to be happy yourself?"

He coloured, and shook his head doubtingly, but there was a light of hope in his eyes, and a brightness in his countenance which had not been there for many a day.

He had borne two years of unavoidable suspense. He was not going to bear one moment that could be avoided, and without a word to any one, he was off to Underwood as soon as breakfast was over the following morning.

It was nearly three years since he had taken his first walk on the same errand, but his feelings now were unlike what they had been then. Then it was youth's first romance, vague, sweet, impassioned, and unreal; a dream, and like a dream it had been swept away. Now it was no more romance, no longer a dream, but a man's tried and proved affection, and the hope for which he

came to venture, was one which contained a life's happiness. He *could* live without her; he knew he could; for he had lived through months of doubt, and hourly expectation of her loss; but he who had felt them, knew what those hours had been, and knew what the future would be. He had cast his earthly hopes of joy upon her, and he felt as those feel who have cast that die.

At first rapid to prevent thought; then slow and steady to weigh again all he had to say; so his steps came to Underwood, and he found himself in Mr. Gresham's study

Mr. Gresham was writing, but he politely left his letter, welcomed Everard with formal kindness, and begged him to be seated.

Without attending to the latter request, Everard said hurriedly. "I suppose, Mr. Gresham, you can guess why I am here."

"In this point," he replied gravely, "you do but justice to my intellect. I confess, that I surmise what the purport of your visit is. In some other points, I confess my intellect is at fault. Be so good, Mr. Vavasour, as to be seated. We may have much to say," and he waved his hand to a chair.

Everard saw he must be patient, and he sat down and said, "What is it you do not understand, Mr. Gresham? Let me explain it. It is my wish and duty to be perfectly open with you."

"To say the truth, Mr. Vavasour, your conduct is an enigma to me. For what purpose deceive the world, and mislead the judgments of men, with a false assumption of position . . . . ."

"Oh! Mr. Gresham," Everard said coloring deeply, and interrupting him eagerly, "are you not unjust? Can you say that I assumed? Dare you say that I

misled. Consider all that passed between us. My own conscience acquits me. Surely *you* at least must acquit me also."

"Certainly, I allow that on one occasion you, as it now appears, very properly rejected my overtures. But why assume? for what purpose thus deceive the world? Who could have imagined a course of conduct so strange as yours? You must allow that towards *me* at least, the assumption was most unjust."

"No, Mr. Gresham, I do not allow it. I never for one instant presumed on the false position in which I stood, to ask your favor. Unjust to *one*, to one only I have been; and her pardon I come now to seek."

"You never intended then to accept in reality your father's will. Am I to understand you so, Mr. Vavasour? Allow me to say, I think the subterfuge unworthy a gentleman of ancient family, and whose character stands high in the eyes of the world."

"I did accept it," Everard said seriously, "and had it been necessary, I would have accepted it for ever. Had my brother continued those evil courses which drew down my father's displeasure, I would, I cannot tell even now whether rightly or wrongly, have accepted altogether the position he assigned me; but I trusted Robert, I knew he would be won back, and I waited. I resolved from the first, that in two years I would consider the point again; and I endeavoured to bear those two years of trial as best I could. My own conscience acquits me of any dishonest subterfuge. I wish that you could acquit me also."

"A man, my dear sir, a man with the feelings of a gentleman is not willing to be deceived. I was deceived, I confess; and had it not been for your honorable conduct, I might have become involved in engagements highly prejudicial to my interests. Of the

intention to deceive, I acquit you, but the fact remains the same."

"I am sincerely sorry to have given you annoyance. I did my best to prevent it. But now, Mr. Gresham, will you let me come to that request which brought me here to day. I came once before, I am come again to ask the hand of your daughter. It is no idle fancy now. For three years my thoughts have never wandered from her."

"You must allow me to ask in return, my dear Mr. Vavasour, what you can offer befitting my daughter's acceptance. Such questions even between gentlemen are necessary." He spoke with a calm composure, into the meaning of which Everard could not penetrate.

"Very little, Mr. Gresham," he said coloring. "I assure you none can know better or feel more than I do, how very little likely it is you should choose me for a son-in-law.

Nevertheless, I persist in my request. Trust her to me, and so far as man is concerned, she shall be happy; and that is the best thing."

"My dear sir, allow me to remind you that we are engaged on a matter of business. Tell me frankly what you can offer."

"I think I may say £500 a year. No more at present; but Mr. Gresham, it shall be more. I am going back to my own profession, and these years have not been years of idleness; I have never, even for one day ceased to study for the law; when the day was not long enough I took the night; and I think I am fitted to get on. I feel that I have the knowledge, and the power; and with hope, and an object before me, I think I shall succeed."

"Ahem! Let me now request you, Mr. Vavasour, to listen to me; for I too have something of importance to communicate.

Let me beg of you to give me your attention." He rose from his seat, and stood majestically on the hearthrug; summoning to his brows an expression of weighty thought. He then began an essay. The gifts of Providence, and man's responsibility coming in for their usual share of discussion. He proceeded next to the shortsightedness of man, and the necessity of submission to disappointment in his most cherished schemes; then to the beauty of that energy, which could form—unsoured by failure — new schemes.

The usual intense interest to know what would be the end of all, supported Everard through the disquisition with unflagging attention. When the general foundation was laid, Mr. Gresham then again said, "Ahem, let me request your particular attention," and proceeded.

"It is now some months since I observed

to my daughter, that it was time for us to renounce our first intentions; that I perceived no signs in your behaviour of a desire to ally yourself with our house. I begged her to banish the subject from her mind, and to prepare herself to submit to any future scheme I might form. To this proposal she declined to acquiesce. With all due delicacy, I may under present circumstances inform you, that she expressed so full a trust in your attachment, as made her unable or unwilling to enter on further engagements at present. Her confidence was so assured that it animated me, and I again suffered myself to indulge in the hope of attaining my first desire. For several months past this confidence has, however, been on the decline, and a new object of ambition has presented itself to my mind. This has been buried in my own breast, for with the patience that becomes those who indulge

in lofty dreams, I determined to return here unfettered, and to await your pleasure. On my return, I heard it idly rumoured that you were about to celebrate the birth of your brother's son; such unnecessary honor offended me, and my mind became the more resolved on my new design. But I waited, Mr. Vavasour. I would not do you injustice, and I waited until I could discover your intentions from your own lips. You know the rest. I now know all, and I consider myself free. I believe I may say, no man has ever with more patience and generosity wished and waited to bestow his favors on the unthankful, than I have done. The time is now passed." He drew himself up with a majesty impossible to pourtray.

"Not unthankful," Everard said warmly. "My dear Mr. Gresham, not unthankful. I have always felt the generous nature of your designs. But there was one gift you

had to give so far beyond the others; there was no power to care for any but that." He paused a moment, and as Mr. Gresham did not proceed, he asked with a steady voice but beating heart, "May I enquire? Do your new designs relate to the other gifts, or to Miss Gresham?"

"They relate, my dear Mr. Vavasour, to myself. I have determined to have a son."

With a great effort Everard restrained a smile at this conclusion to his suspense; but the solemn gaze that was fastened upon him forced him to be grave also, and he calmly and cordially said, "I am very glad to hear it."

"You understand, therefore, that my daughter is no longer my heiress."

"If she does not object,—if she will consent to poverty with me, no piece of news ever made me happier in my life. Her

riches I ever felt a burden too great for me to bear."

"As to poverty, Mr. Vavasour, I trust I shall allow no child of mine to suffer poverty. A proper arrangement can doubtless be made. Am I to understand, therefore, that after this disclosure, you persist in addressing her?"

"May I see her?" was Everard's reply. "Have I indeed, your consent at last?"

"Extremely singular, Mr. Vavasour. I consider the case extremely singular. Certainly if your attachment is so entirely disinterested, I can offer no further objection. The rest is in my daughter's hands. After speaking to her for a few moments, I will bring her to you to give her answer for herself. I wish you success."

Mr. Gresham entered the drawing-room where his daughter was sitting with Miss Price.

He closed the door with an air of impor-

tance, and approaching her, kissed her brow with paternal dignity.

Surprised at his manner, Angela hastily rose from her chair.

"Be seated for a moment, my love. I require your attention for a few seconds. Mr. Everard Vavasour is in my study; on an errand, perhaps, not wholly unexpected by you."

Not unexpected; yet Angela became very pale, and looked with an intent and speaking gaze, in her father's face.

"My love," he said kindly, "I will not keep you in suspense. I have told Mr. Vavasour that he shall receive his answer from yourself. But before your decision is formed, I am anxious to communicate to you a circumstance which possibly may influence your choice." He made a pause, then gravely added, "I am about to take a wife to myself."

"Adelaide Vansittart!" Angela exclaimed, somewhat startled, yet when the announcement was made, feeling as if she had known it for years.

"As my request for the honor of her hand has not yet been despatched, my love, your delicacy will perceive, that it is not for me, whatever my hopes may be, to speak further upon this subject, at present; but I will not conceal from you that she is the object of my choice."

"My dear Papa, I am very glad," Angela said, rising and kissing him with tears, she hardly knew of what meaning, in her eyes. "I hope she will make you happier than I have done."

"Enough, my love, enough on that subject—but allow me to point out to you, that such being the case, it is possible, it is indeed most probable that you will not be my heiress."

"I never wished it," she cried eagerly, "if Mr. Vavasour does not mind, I am too happy."

"A singular case certainly," observed Mr. Gresham, contemplating her like a curiosity. "Two very remarkable young people. Well, then, my love, there is no need to delay. Be so good as to prepare yourself to follow me to my study, where you will find Mr. Vavasour awaiting you."

She did follow him after throwing her arms in trembling excitement round her aunt's neck, and together they re-entered the study. Again, Mr. Gresham closed the door, and as on a former occasion intruded his presence on the interview; but this time both were too happy and too grateful to feel anger, and both silently waited what further he had to say. Angela with downcast eyes and a crimson cheek—Everard with *his* gaze fixed upon her.

After closing the door, Mr. Gresham took his daughter's hand, and led her up to Everard; he then spoke a few words on matrimony, the duties of fathers in disposing of their children, his own duty in particular, and his hope that the duty was now fulfilled.

His voice became slightly agitated as he spoke, and still more so when at last he put her hand into Everard's, with these words. "To you, Mr. Vavasour, my cares being over, I now consign my child, and from what I have learned of your character, it is my hope that I have no need to enjoin you to love and cherish her."

"No need," Everard replied, in a low voice. "With God's blessing she *shall* be happy."

"To you, my love," he continued, "I have only to observe that a wife's best happiness is in submission to her husband;

and I think, and in fact am assured, that the character of him whom you have chosen will enable you to submit without regret."

Tearful, but smiling, Angela raised her eyes to Everard's face, and met that stedfast gaze of love and truth bent down upon her, which seemed to say, as it had ever said, that she had indeed built her house upon a rock. The storms of this world's sorrows might assail them, death might part, but there was that foundation in their love which nothing could wash away.

CHAPTER XI.

But though the pleasures of the day were past,—
For lively pleasures are not formed to last,—
And though less vivid they became, less strong,
Through life they lived and were enjoyed as long;
So deep the impression of that happy day,
Nor time, nor cares, could wear it all away.

CRABBE.

A SUPPLEMENTARY chapter is rarely an interesting one. Interest lies less in broad facts than in details, and a narrative of dry facts is as unsubstantial and unin-vigorating a repast as a dinner of dry

bones. Some few words, however, may be needful here.

The result for which Adelaide Vansittart had been toiling for several years (to do her justice, without any hope or wish of displacing Angela) was attained, and she became Mr. Gresham's wife, enjoying to the uttermost that lavish wealth, and that "position," which she had so long contemplated with envy. The attainment of their wishes is, however, sometimes, and to some characters, a benefit, and in the sun of satisfaction faults die away and virtues appear. So it was with her. She became less worldly, less frivolous, and less selfish; was pleased to do good, and if a fine lady, was a very estimable one. There was, indeed, in both hers and Mr. Gresham's hearts, a certain hollowness and shallowness which could not perfectly be overcome; but even this suffered some change

by and through the birth of a son, and through the anxieties of the very sincere affection they gave to him.

Upon the whole, Mr. Gresham's choice was good, and his marriage a happy one. If his wife did not actually love him she was very contented with him, consulted him on all points, and governed him absolutely.

A happiness of another kind was that which reigned at Audley Court. To say that Robert never gave his wife a moment's uneasiness, would be to say what human nature scarcely warrants, for there was that weakness and indolence in his disposition, which could not fail at times to be weary in well doing. There were, after his life became more free and unfettered, occasional returns of his old restlessness; there were days on which Hope felt a secret vague misgiving that all was not well, that longings for a more lawless life assailed him;

but these were but passing clouds; perhaps to her loving eyes merciful clouds, lest she, even she, clinging too closely to the joys of this world, should lose the clearness of her gaze above. Robert was sincerely bent to do well, and sincerely humble in his distrust of himself, and sincerity and humility are man's best guardian angels. With them he cannot wander far, or, if he wander, cannot fail to be brought back. So far from shrinking from advice or warning, he again and again implored Mr. Addison to watch over him; begging him even though he might at the time resent it, never to fail to speak, if he saw in him anything unworthy of his father's heir and Everard's brother.

Between the two brothers unchanging confidence and affection subsisted. If Everard had once been neglected, if but a tranquil love was his portion, that time

was for ever past. He had assumed, he had been forced to assume, his father's place, and though the place had been left for ever, the reverend love he had won in it remained. If Everard spoke his words were law; if Everard came it was a gala day. Far more than he had ever hoped for, or desired, was poured overflowing, without measure, into his bosom, and he was happy.

Happy, not elated; unconscious, unpresuming; stedfast himself, pitiful to others; strong, but not in his own strength; guided by the memory of his father dead, and the will of his Father above.

Of his and Angela's married life, one trifling circumstance only shall be recorded, and this not because an uncommon or an unexpected one, but simply as one of those every day instances, of how little youth and inexperience knows of its tastes and require ments.

They began life on £2,000 a year, a sum amply sufficient for every comfort, and most luxuries, but a sum needing management, and certainly far removed from Mr. Gresham's lavish wealth. Out of this income £200 a year was allotted to Angela. When her father mentioned the fact to her, she remonstrated against the sum as excessive, assuring him her tastes were very simple, and her needs few. He replied that it was befitting her position, and refused to attend to her request that an alteration should be made.

Six months after her marriage, having been supplied in her trousseau with everything woman could desire, Everard one day observed to her that he thought she had a few bills, and it would be as well to collect them. She readily acquiesced, though at the same time she assured him they only amounted to a few pounds. The bills were

collected, and the few pounds, when added together, amounted to something only a little less than her year's income.

With a countenance expressive of the utmost horror and dismay, Angela carried the sum total to her husband. He smiled, and furnished her with the money required without reproach or remonstrance, or, indeed, without much appearance of surprise.

This was in March. In the Christmas following the bills had no need to be collected. They came in of themselves, and in considerable numbers. During the nine past months Angela had practised what she called rigid economy; nevertheless, when the accounts were made up, they stood to her income in nearly the same proportion as before.

With a countenance of still greater dismay, and yet without much trepidation, the

total was again carried to Everard; but this time the effect of her communication was different. Far from smiling, his countenance was grave and sad.

"You are angry," she cried, in sudden terror, for such a cloud had not shadowed his face since their marriage.

"Angry, dearest," he said, distressed at the word, "oh no, very far from angry; only fearful that I was wrong in allowing you to sacrifice so much as you did for me when you married me."

"You never shall say that again," she said, with tears of passionate regret.

And he never did. There was no need.

Her life, her joy, seemed to hang upon his approving look. When she saw a shadow on his brow, she knew she had not done well, and she was not happy.

Happy surely are those who have chosen for their earthly guardians, spirits tried, and

stedfast and strong. Happy. And yet for them life's trials are but begun. It is not moroseness, it is but wisdom to feel that for such, even in their very safety and happiness, the world has fierce temptations in store; not the snares of earthly vanity, but the more subtle snare of earthly idolatry.

> Whatever passes as a cloud between
> The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
> Causing that brighter world to disappear
> Or seem less lovely, and its hope less dear,
> This is our world, our idol; though it bear
> Affection's impress, or devotion's air.

THE END.

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